



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

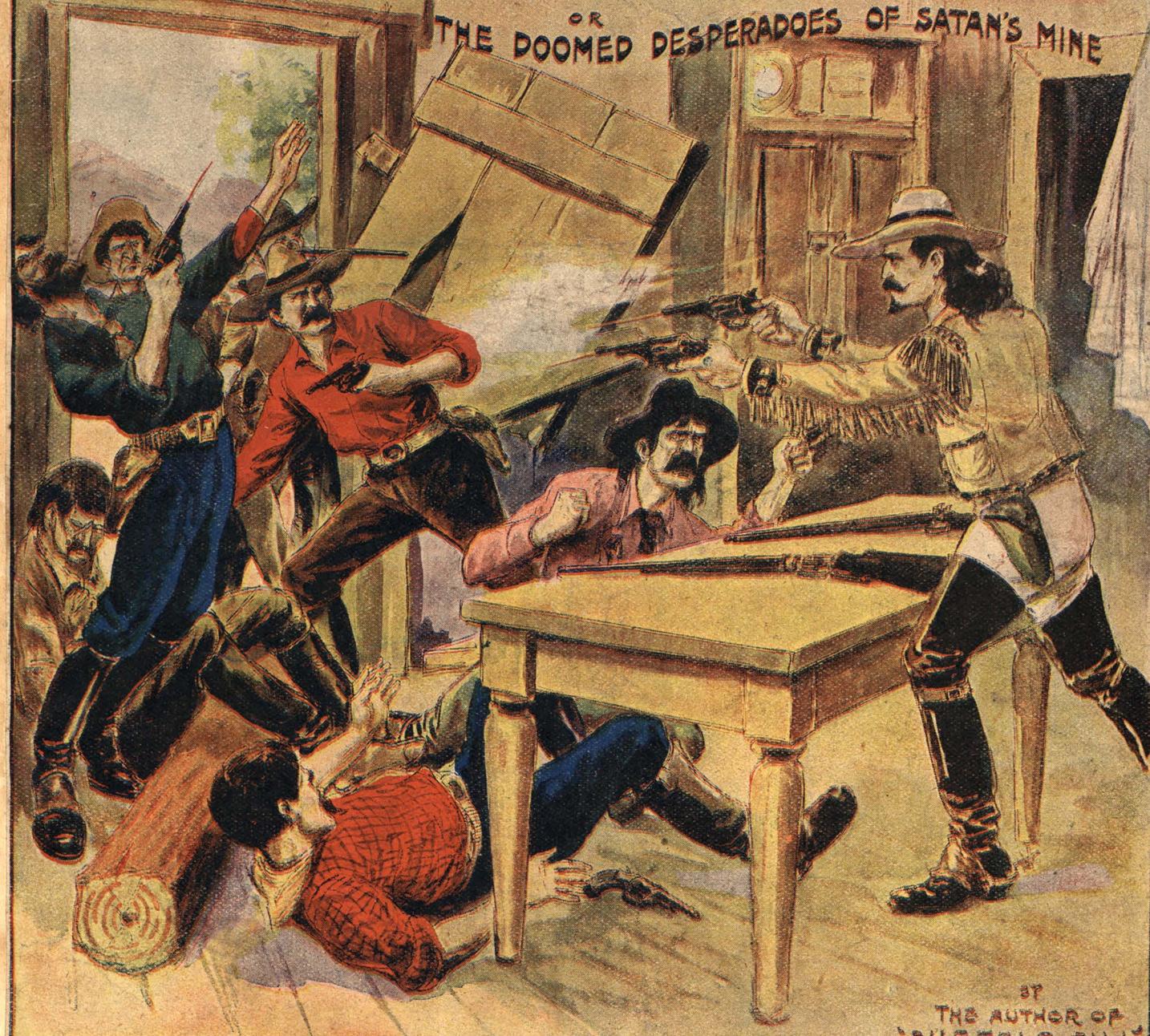
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No. 47.

Price, Five Cents.

BUFFALO BILL'S DEADLIEST DEAL

OR
THE DOOMED DESPERADOES OF SATAN'S MINE



BY
THE AUTHOR OF
"BUFFALO BILL"

BUFFALO BILL, ENTRENCHED BEHIND THE BIG TABLE, POURED BULLETS THICK AND FAST INTO THE MOB OF DESPERADOES.



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NEW YORK, April 5, 1902.

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BUFFALO BILL'S DEADLIEST DEAL;

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By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE.

It was the bravest of brave things to do—the deadliest of chances to take in the discharge of duty.

It was to invade the "enemy's country," so to speak, and so-called because in an Edenlike spot of the wild West, at their abiding-place known as Satan's Mine, had settled the very worst element of the country—fugitives from justice, murderers, desperadoes, horse thieves, card sharps, and men who were all that was bad.

With a few good men in with the bad, working for fortunes for loved ones far away, the by far greater majority were of the outcast, outlaw class.

A few good ranchers near Satan's Mine often felt the heavy, cruel and robber hand of these outlaws, who hated honest men, the soldiers at the fort, and, above all, Buffalo Bill, the chief of scouts and his men in buckskin.

The men at Satan's Mine had felt the heavy and merciless hand of Buffalo Bill at their throats on more than one occasion.

They had marked him for their prey when the time came—to strike him in the back.

But the complaints of the ranchers to the commandant of the fort sixty miles away had resulted in that officer telling Buffalo Bill to take his entire band of scouts and go and clean out Satan's Mine in his own way.

"I prefer to go alone, sir, and spot the men the hangman wants, and, when I know them—then act," said Buffalo Bill, the handsome and daring scout.

"I have such confidence in you, Cody, that I will say do as you please, though your life is not worth a counterfeit dollar if you go alone to Satan's Mine."

"My plan, sir, is to go to a deserted ranch I know of, and make my home there, for it is within a dozen miles of Satan's Mine."

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

"I will drive some cattle and horses there, take my big dog, Deathgrip, with me, and settle down as a rancher, while I know of one desperado who owes me his life more than once whom I will make my ally, and in time I will sift the chaff from the wheat in the camps, and know just the men who are gallows fruit."

"Go about it in your own way, Cody, take your own time, carry what horses and cattle you need, and wipe out the gang, is all I will tell you," said the colonel.

Two days after, a surprise fell upon the fort, for it was told that Buffalo Bill had bought a ranch a day's ride from the fort, had given up scouting and was going to turn cattleman.

Some wondered, others shook their heads, while still more decided that Buffalo Bill was playing a deadly game for a good purpose.

To his ranch Buffalo Bill started, with a few of his scouts to drive his cattle there, and his dog, Deathgrip—an enormous brute, half Great Dane, half Siberian bloodhound, and a terror.

The cabin where Cody settled was in a cañon in the mountains—a pleasant spot with a fine outlook over the plains, and good water, grass and wood in plenty near.

But it had a bad name, and was called the Haunted Ranch, as all who had dwelt there before had lost their lives in some mysterious way.

It was feared and avoided by all, for the claim was made by many that ghosts had actually been seen there.

As a further incentive to follow his trail of doom against the desperadoes of Satan's Mine, Buffalo Bill, on his way to his ranch, had run upon a tragic scene—a rich ranchero and his son dead, slain by outlaws, and the daughter and sister a captive, to be held for ransom, or forced into a marriage with the chief of the road agents.

The scout was alone, but in his reckless way he fired upon the outlaws, then rushed upon them and rescued the young girl in spite of the odds against him.

The rancher and his son were taken to their home for burial, and the young girl left there in the care of the old negro servants who had followed the fortunes of Major Hart to the Wild West.

"Have no fear in living here, Miss Hart, for things will not be so bad in the future, I promise you, and I

will tell you as a secret that your father and brother will soon be avenged," said Buffalo Bill to the young girl, and he further added that he intended to be a neighbor, and settle at the Haunted Ranch.

"I will do as that man says, for I feel perfect confidence in him," said Hazel Hart to the old black auntie who had been as a mother to her.

Thus it was that Buffalo Bill settled at the Haunted Ranch, alone save for his dog and cattle.

His first visit to Satan's Mine created a sensation, but he went there to find the outlaw known as Bricktop, and to see if he could trust him as a pard.

He found that he could, and told him to still remain as the comrade of the outlaw band, who, to aid them in their lawless deeds, were known as the vigilantes, pretending to put down evil deeds, and thus using a pretended honesty to carry on their black crimes.

With Bricktop as his secret ally, and Hazel Hart aware of the motive of his going to the Haunted Ranch and willing to help him all in her power, Buffalo Bill took up his abode in the cabin, to enter upon the deadly and desperate work for which he had been picked out by the colonel commanding the fort.

Whether the "vigilantes" suspected Buffalo Bill or not, of being on their trail, immediately after his scouts went to Satan's Mine to purchase supplies there, their leader entered upon a plot to kill him off before he could do anything against them.

To carry out his murderous plot, the leader picked out his men, choosing the unlucky number—including himself—of thirteen, and the scout's secret ally, Bricktop, was one of them.

"We will end Buffalo Bill mighty quick, and leave another ghost to haunt the old cabin," said the vigilante captain to his assassins, as he made known his plans and set the hour the next day when they would start upon their murderous mission.

But Bricktop was true to his scout pard, and he slipped away from Satan's Mine and sought the Hart Ranch, asking Hazel to go and warn Buffalo Bill of the intended attack, so that he could get away.

Alone did the young girl ride to the Haunted Ranch and warn Buffalo Bill of his danger, and then returned at the full speed of her horse to her home.

And Buffalo Bill heeded the warning only in preparing to meet his foes.

He did not fly from his cabin in spite of the odds he had to face.

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

3

He fearlessly awaited their coming.

He would face his fate then and there.

If he fell, he would not cross the Great Divide without company, lawless company though it might be.

Then he quietly awaited the ordeal.

CHAPTER II.

AN UNLUCKY NUMBER.

Though the desperate battle at the Haunted Ranch of one man—Buffalo Bill—against thirteen has been told in both history and romance, and was one of the greatest encounters of borderland, I may be pardoned for again telling the story of the desperate and fatal duel.

Buffalo Bill, after being warned by Hazel Hart, set to work to prepare for all that was before him.

He first entered his cabin, and emptying his rifle, a double-barrel shotgun and revolvers of their old loads, reloaded them with the greatest care.

Then he whetted his bowie-knife and hatchet, after which he drew a large table up before the fireplace and across the room, facing the door and a dozen feet from it, and placed his weapons upon it.

Next he stripped himself of his outer clothing, and, going out of his cabin, looked out over the plain.

"There they come—thirteen of them, but only twelve to fight, as Bricktop is my secret friend," and he smiled slightly as he named the number.

His face was pale, but calm and stern, his eyes fairly blazing.

Looking at the coming horsemen through his glasses, Buffalo Bill said aloud:

"That is not their captain in the lead, but Dick Dunn, their lieutenant, from what Bricktop told me about him," and Buffalo Bill referred to a large man, heavily bearded, who led the band.

"I guess we'll get hurt, Deathgrip," he added to his dog, "but so will some of them."

"By the way," he continued, "I am sorry to lose your aid, old dog, but as you don't know Bricktop, he may be the first one you'll jump upon, and I've got to tie you up and fight the good fight without you," and the huge and savage brute, greatly to his disgust, was tied securely in the next room of the cabin.

Within half-an-hour the band of vigilant despera-

does halted in front of the cabin, while Buffalo Bill stood in the door, calmly regarding them.

"How are you, pard?" said Dick Dunn, whose evil face matched those of his comrades.

"All right, up to date," was the cool answer.

"You are Buffalo Bill?"

"If you like, I'll claim the name."

"You have bought this ranch?"

"Let it go at that."

"And you have a lot of stolen horses here?"

"And you are a liar!"

"You have horses here you did not buy?"

"Yes, but I inherited them from some of your gang, whom I killed some time ago for killing Major Hart and son, and kidnaping his daughter. Do you claim the horses?"

"Yes; but we are vigilantes, not murderers."

"You are Satan's Mine desperadoes; but take your horses."

"After we take you we will."

"Want me?"

"Yes."

"On what charge?"

"Murderer and horsethief."

"You must think I am one of your kind; but take me."

"Well, we know what you are, and up to that tree you go."

"And here I am, so set to work, and I warn you that I'll die hard."

"Dismount, men, and we'll take him."

"I warn you off!"

"Will you submit, and stand trial?"

"Not when I am already sentenced to die beforehand."

"We will show you no mercy if you refuse."

"I have not asked it, have I?"

"It is useless to be merciful, pards—take him!"

Buffalo Bill disappeared from the door, back into the darkness of the cabin.

He had sprung to his stand behind the large table back near the fireplace.

His weapons were before him, and he had closed and barred the door as he did so.

With wild yells to strike terror to the heart of the scout, the desperadoes seized a large log and rushed forward.

It struck the door heavily and dashed it in, and

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

the rifle of Buffalo Bill followed the crash, killing two men.

But others crowded over their dead bodies, and the terrible fight was on in all its fury.

The double-barrel shotgun spoke twice and poured a hail of bullets upon the vigilantes.

Then the revolvers of Buffalo Bill, one in each hand, began their deadly work, while the rattle of the weapons of the vigilantes was incessant.

The roar of the shots, scuffling of feet, cries of the desperadoes and howls of the bound dog were fearful.

But Buffalo Bill was calm, silent, quick of action, and the fighting devil in his nature was aroused to its utmost.

He was wounded several times, but kept his feet, while back in the darkness of the cabin he was seen only by the flashes of his weapons; his foes were in the full light.

He wished to throw no shot away, but in that mad rush that was impossible.

He fought hard, fast and wickedly, for he knew the odds against him and the fate he would suffer if taken alive.

Dick Dunn had fallen, shot through the heart.

Others had gone down on top of him, and the house looked like a slaughter-pen.

But the vigilantes were aroused to a frenzy, and rushed forward.

Buffalo Bill had emptied his revolvers, and now seized his knife in one hand, the hatchet in the other, shoved the table over upon his foes, and sprang to the hand-to-hand conflict.

Bricktop had fired his weapons, but not at the scout, and time and again he went down as though wounded.

It was the ruse he was playing to pretend to be in the fight.

In spite of all, Buffalo Bill had been careful not to fire upon Bricktop.

A blow on the head, a knife cut, a shot in the arm, did Buffalo Bill receive in the mad attack, and then it was close quarters and hand-to-hand to the death.

Down went Buffalo Bill, but only for an instant, for he arose and hurled his foes from him, though covered with blood and almost blinded.

The demon of death was abroad, and Bricktop set the example to his two remaining comrades to fly, exclaiming:

"He is hell, pards! He can't be killed! fly!"

Out of the door they dashed, but, maddened now to a killing frenzy, streaming with blood, and with his warcry ringing upon his lips, Buffalo Bill followed, seizing the revolver of Dick Dunn from his belt, and only held up by his iron will.

The three last of the band, save Bricktop, mounted their horses and fled in dismay, one wounded badly.

Looking back, Bricktop saw Buffalo Bill lying upon the ground in front of his cabin, as if dead.

He dropped back, unnoticed, behind his flying comrades, until he was out of sight, and then returned to the scene of carnage, a double motive in his mind and heart.

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CHAPTER III.

BORDER FRIENDS.

Wild with admiration at the wonderful fight his scout-friend, Buffalo Bill, had made against such odds, and anxious to see the result to the scout, Bricktop had hastened back to the cabin, fearing nothing from the wounded vigilantes, who were escaping with all speed back to Satan's Mine.

Bricktop had been anxious to aid Buffalo Bill in the unequal fight, yet dared not do so, for fear of his own safety.

He had noticed that even in the thick of the fight, Buffalo Bill had been cool enough to make a sign to him to keep out of range, and had avoided several times firing when he was in line, and he thanked him for it in his heart, and had endeavored to call the retreat.

He saw that Buffalo Bill was badly wounded, and, as he believed, mortally, and he was anxious to return to him.

If he found him not fatally wounded, he would do all he could for him, and that was considerable, as he had been in early life a student of medicine, and in prison was a hospital steward, while, since coming West, he had had considerable experience with wounds.

He slipped back to the cabin, and beheld the unconscious body of Buffalo Bill lying where he had fallen.

Bending over him, he muttered, as he laid his hand upon his heart and felt his pulse, and, speaking without assuming the border dialect:

"Alive! by Heaven! He is a man of iron!"

"But, good God! he is shot and cut to pieces, but I believe he will live."

"If he dies, it would be big capital for me, for what he has would be mine, and I'd get the credit of coming back, as I would state, and fighting it out with him."

"He has acted squarely with me, and I'll do the same with him, so here goes."

He raised the limp form in his arms, bore it back to the cabin, and then muttered:

"Well, I know not where to begin."

But he took from his pocket a well-worn case of surgical instruments, which he had robbed a doctor of some time before, and set to work with real skill, and, his experienced nose discovering where Bill kept his liquor, he resuscitated him with a dose of this, and cold water applications, extracted the bullets, sewed up the scalp wound and dressed the others.

"Well, pard, where are your men?" said Bill, recovering his consciousness and gazing about him.

"Gone home; but yer must keep quiet, fer I has got yer under my care, and I'll fetch yer round, I hopes."

"Oh, I'll not die, for it isn't in me to be wiped out by a pack o' curs like those fellows; but what is that noise?"

"It are yer dog, an' he's jist been raisin' hell ter git out and jine in ther dance."

"Yes, I shut him in the next room for fear they would shoot him, or he would bite you."

"You was full o' business, pard, fer a while; but, good Lordy! ain't yer ther devil on horseback when yer gits loose?"

"Two got away, I believe," said Bill, with a triumphant flash in his eyes.

"Yas, with this child, who played 'possum ter git back ter yer; but they went off with a hole in 'em, your partin' compliments, and may go under, and that will shelve yer eleven stiffs in one fight."

"But yer mustn't talk—"

"It is you that are talking, pard."

"Waal, I'll do it all; and now I've got ter git back ter camp to-night, and find somebody ter nurse yer, for—"

"Hark!"

The keen ear of Buffalo Bill, in spite of his sufferings, had detected a sound without.

Cautiously Bricktop went to the door, and looked out.

"Hand me my revolvers, pard, and load them, for I am not dead yet," said Buffalo Bill, grimly.

"It are Injuns."

"Indians?"

"Fact; but one are a gal, t'other a chief, fer I knows them."

"Who are they?"

"One are Blackfoot, the great medicine chief of the Sioux, and t'other are his daughter, they calls Red Dove, ther queen o' ther Sioux, and she are a stunner fer looks, an' they do say her mother were a paleface gal, ther daughter o' a French trader, an' she fell in love with Blackfoot, an' married him; but they has stopped, fer they sees cold meat lyin' around and look cur'us."

"Go and ask them to come in, for I know the girl."

"I'll do it," and Bricktop stepped out of the cabin. At the sight of him, Blackfoot drew his arrow back, and Red Dove leveled a small rifle she carried, both ready to greet a foe, should the vigilante prove such.

Seeing the hostile demonstrations made by the medicine chief and Red Dove at the sight of him, Bricktop sung out lustily:

"Hold on, fer up goes my claws."

Raising his hands over his head to show that he was friendly, he advanced toward where the two Indians sat upon their ponies, and said:

"Does yer want ter see anybody?"

"Yes, this is the tepee of the great white chief, Buffalo Bill," said Red Dove, in excellent English.

"Wish to see him," continued Red Dove.

"Waal, as you is friends o' his'n, I reckon ther doctor 'll agree, but he hev jist had ther hell o' a row, killed nine galoots dead, as yer kin see, not bein' blind o' one eye, wounded another and skeert two more nigh ter death, or I are a liar, while he are in a condition to make a good pepper-box fer an eatin' house."

Only half of this the Indians were able to master, for Blackfoot also spoke English, having learned it from his paleface wife; but they could see enough by the general looks of things to know that something fearful had happened.

At the request of Bricktop, they dismounted, lariated their ponies, and entered the cabin.

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

"Oh! is my friend dying?" anxiously cried the Indian maiden, as she sprung to his side.

"Not I, only crippled up a little by a war a short time since," said Buffalo Bill.

The maiden glanced around the floor, at the dead bodies lying there, and then again at the bandaged head, arms and legs of the victor, and said:

"It has been a fierce battle of paleface against paleface."

"Yes, and twelve ag'in one, and he ther top dog o' ther heap, as yer kin see, redskins."

"I have not forgotten my friend who saved me from the white chief, Red Breast, and I have sought him with my father, who wished to thank him for saving the Red Dove from her foes.

"This is the Red Dove's father, Blackfoot, the Sioux medicine chief."

The Indian chief stepped forward, and laid his hand upon the head of Buffalo Bill, while he said softly:

"The Blackfoot came to see the great white chief, and he finds him a giant in battle.

"He came to thank him for saving his child from a wicked paleface; he will remain with the white chief and nurse him, for he is a great medicine man, and the Red Dove will go to the village of my people for herbs the red men use to heal wounds."

"You is level-headed there, chief, and you kin nurse him back, you and ther Dove, ef it kin be did.

"As for myself, I'll have to levant out o' this, or I might git strung up for friendship.

"You is in good hands, pard Bill, ef they is red ones, and I'll leave yer, an' I'll keep an eye open, and post yer as ter what is said an' did in camp, an' drap in on yer myself as soon as I kin leave without a rope around my neck.

"As I go by, I'll jist tarry and tell that lovely gal at ther Hart ranch of ther scrimmidge, and how yer is gittin' along, an' mayhap she'll drap in ter see yer; but I guess as how she'd better not, as two pretty gals ter nuss one feller are jist twice too many.

"Yas, I'll argy ag'in her comin'.

"Good-by, pard, and ef yer does look as though yer'd been in a threshin'-machine, yar hes jist ther iron natur' ter pull through.

"Good-by, Injuns, and old red doctor, ef yer prescribes, jist let ther Dove give ther doses, an' he'll improve."

Having delivered himself of this long speech, Bricktop took his departure from the cabin, delighted at the fortunate arrival of competent nurses for Bill, and rode rapidly away toward the Hart ranch, just as darkness began to fall.

CHAPTER IV.

BRICKTOP'S STORY.

That the astounding news of the vigilantes' fight with Buffalo Bill created the greatest excitement in Satan's Mine, the reader can well imagine.

Having stopped at the Hart ranch, and given Hazel a glowing account of the fearful fight, and told her that Buffalo Bill was in the hands of two good Indian nurses, but not mentioning that one was Red Dove, the Sioux queen, Bricktop hastened on to Satan's Mine, where he arrived, to find the town still astir, though it was after midnight. The name of Buffalo Bill was on every lip.

His coming was greeted with a wild shout of welcome, which made him feel proud to be of so great importance, and he was very wary at first as to how he had escaped.

But learning that Jack Candaliss had since died of his wound, the parting compliment of Buffalo Bill, and that the other survivor of the combat had given a dozen different accounts of it, varying each time he told it, Bricktop fortified himself with a glass of tanglefoot, and began, while the entire crowd hung breathless upon his words, for, though desperate encounters were of daily occurrence, and most daring deeds were done, such a thing as one man doing what Buffalo Bill had accomplished, was unheard of, even in that reckless community.

"Yer see, pard and gents o' Satan's Mine," began Bricktop.

"Loot'nant Dick Dunn, o' ther vigilantes, hed heard that ther Dead Shot hed in his possession some critters as he hed not give dust fer, an' consequently 'twere thought he hed stole 'em.

"So we, that is ther loot'nant, me, and t'other eleven gerloots, went fer ther Haunted Ranch, an' we were made welcome by ther Dead Shot.

"He tole us ther horses were his'n, took in squar' fightin', an' I kinder believes him, now, an' he said, furthermore, that ef we wanted 'em ther would be a leetle disturbance, and perhaps a funeral or two.

"Boys, pard, and gents o' Satan's Mine, he were

a prophet, I kin swar, an' you'll agree when yer hears ther verdict.

"Ther loot'nant were brimful o' fight, said he were goin' ter sail in fer horsemeat, an' he formed his regiment in order, an' we started.

"Buffalo Bill hed fallen back on ther cabin interior, an' as we went in through ther door there he stood ahind a table, with his arsenal laid out afore him, an' ther fust one that spoke were ther shotgun.

"It said death, an' ther loot'nant were the one it spoke fer.

"Now, I allus loved that Dick Dunn, an', seein' him turn toes up, made me revengeful, an' I urged ther boys on, kinder takin' ther lead like, an' in we went.

"I seen guns a-levelin' an' I dropped, havin' tumbled over the loot'nant, an' two gerloots ahind me got their checks called in.

"Then ther Dead Shot threw down ther rifle, an' he got a revolver in each hand, an', Lordy luv all o' us, but ther music began then, fer we was firin' our shootin'-irons and ther work were hot.

"We got ther Dead Shot down, but up he riz; we hit him, struck him, shot him, but he jist thought it were pie.

"We yelled, an' he said nothin'; ther pistols made music as was funeral marches, an' his big dog that were in ther next room, howled terrible, barked frightful, an' tore up awful, an' ef he hed got at us we'd hev been chawed up fer parrot food, same as crackers.

"Waal, I thought then ther fight lasted some weeks, but now I know it wasn't many minutes, an' then, seein' that some one must git out ter tell ther tale, I kinder dropped back, and ther boys were willin' ter foller.

"But thar come that howlin' terrer arter us, a hatchet in one hand an' a revolver in t'other, an' down dropped Jim Kearney right outside ther door, an' Jack Canliss tuk his dose o' pills as he got on his horse.

"My horse, as we went down ther hill, fell, an' I thought he were wounded, an' so called ter ther boys ter wait.

"But they were goin' hell-ter-split homewards, an' I jist laid low until I seed my critter were all right, havin' jist stepped on a rock that flung him.

"While I were there I seen Buffalo Bill look after ther boys, not seein' me, fer I laid low, an' then he

bust inter a laff, as though he'd hed plenty o' fun, an' went back inter ther cabin.

"Then I lit out, an' when I got out onter the perairie, looked back, an' thar he were, not seemin' ter mind his wounds, an' durned ef I believes we hurt him much, though I knows we hit him often.

"Now, gents, pards and hearers, I, for one, decides that he didn't steal those horses, an' a man what did what he done shu'd be left alone until kingdom come."

"You are right, Bricktop, and I'll see that he is not troubled by the vigilantes again, unless he does some lawless act to give us a hold on him."

The speaker was Dagger Don, the vigilante captain, who had come in just as Bricktop began his story, which steered clear of the truth in some particulars.

The sentiments of the Don were echoed by the crowd, in whose estimation Buffalo Bill had suddenly become the greatest of heroes through his desperate fight.

But there were several persons present who had lost friends in that fight, and who secretly swore vengeance against the Dead Shot whenever chance allowed them to seek redress for their fancied wrongs.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS.

That Buffalo Bill's escape from death in his desperate encounter had been marvelous none who saw him but would admit, and wonder how a human being could resist successfully such odds, and live under such wounds.

But, fortunately, the bullet wound in his side had glanced on his ribs, the one on his shoulder had passed only through his flesh, and the severe cut in his head had not broken the bone, while the other cuts and wounds were not of a serious nature to such a man as he was.

Though fearfully sore the next day, when Red Dove returned from the village of her people, bringing the herbs needed by the medicine chief, Bill felt better after his wounds were skillfully dressed by Blackfoot, and his weakness from loss of blood was his greatest drawback.

But Blackfoot loved his daughter, as the idol of his heart, and he hated the renegade Robin Red Breast, with all the intensity of his nature, so that

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

the man that had saved Red Dove from his power won the old chief's love, and he was untiring in his devotions to the paleface stranger, whose desperate fight was a marvel to him.

Red Dove also remained at the Haunted Ranch, aiding all in her power, and Deathgrip, who had been released from his confinement by the Indian maiden, looked upon them with kindly eyes when he saw that they were ministering to the wants of his master.

Upon seeing the great dog, Blackfoot had said to Buffalo Bill that if he had gotten loose to join in the fight not one of the assassins would have escaped to tell the tale.

"That is very true, chief," replied Bill; but he kept to himself the real secret of why he had not released the dog.

At first it was his intention to have Deathgrip aid in the defense, but, remembering at a late moment, upon entering the cabin, that Bricktop was forced to be among the attacking party, he feared that he might be the object of Grip's attentions, and to save that worthy villain he preferred to stand alone in the fracas.

That Deathgrip felt hurt was evident, for he showed upon coming out that his master had slighted an opportunity for him to do full justice to the vigilantes' flesh, but, seeing that Bill was suffering, he forgave him, licked his hand, and remained near by to be of service if needed.

The third night after the fight, Deathgrip, who was in the cabin, suddenly darted out with an angry bark, but soon returned as if satisfied that no danger threatened the cabin, though his actions caused Bill to tell Blackfoot that there was some one around.

The chief went out of the cabin, but came bounding back with a scared face.

"What is it, chief?" coolly asked Bill.

"A shadow from the happy hunting grounds," he said, with evident emotion.

"Oh, you have seen my ghost?"

The chief nodded, and Red Dove went to the door, but she, too, returned, and evidently had seen the same object that had so moved her father.

"It is a Death Shadow," she said, in a hushed voice.

"Yes, it is the ghost of this ranch, for you know it is said to be haunted," said Bill.

"We Indians have heard of it, and few ever come near here; but you live here," she said, softly.

"Why not? I have seen the ghost, and it has done me no harm, and I cannot say as much for those who are not ghosts."

"Whitch way was it going?"

"Toward the cañon."

"Yes, and coming from the graves in the thicket?"

"Yes, white chief."

"That's its favorite walk—but, hark! there's a hoof-fall without."

Blackfoot went to the door, and started back as in the darkness he beheld a horse and rider.

But ere he could raise the rifle he carried in his hands came the words:

"I would see the ranchero known as Buffalo Bill."

Bill started, for he recognized the speaker's voice, and said hurriedly:

"Take her horse, chief, and ask her to come in; but is she alone?"

"Yes," answered Blackfoot, and he stepped outside, and, with a gallantry not to be expected from an Indian, lifted Hazel from her saddle, for it was she who had made the midnight visit to the Haunted Ranch.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIR VISITOR.

"Miss Hazel, this is indeed kind of you, but you risk much to come here," said Bill, clasping the tiny hand, as the maiden, with her riding habit drawn around her, came forward softly and bent over him.

"Are you sorely wounded?" she said.

"Yes, but for your warning, sent by Bricktop, I would have been killed."

"Thirteen against you," she said, with admiration.

"No, only twelve, for Bricktop was but a lay-figure in the fight."

"And Candless has died, making ten who fell."

"I knew he would, for I had a deadly aim on him as he rode away," was the quiet response.

"It was marvelous; you are a wonderful man, Mr. Cody."

"Thank you, Miss Hazel; I am a strangely lucky man in getting out ahead of the hounds, but it was brave of you to come this far to see me."

"I would have gone further, for I owe much to you, but I have brought you some little things I thought you might find useful," and, going to the door, she brought back a large basket, upon which

Deathgrip had had his weather eye, having scented out its contents to be edibles.

The basket contained delicacies which were seldom seen in a border sick-room. A cowboy had taken a long ride to the nearest fort to get them.

Then there was a roll of lint, medicines, flask of brandy, and numerous little knick-knacks which only a woman would think of.

Buffalo Bill expressed his thanks warmly, and then Hazel asked:

"And your nurses—are they good to you?"

"I could not have better, for one is Blackfoot, the Sioux medicine chief, and the other his daughter, known as Red Dove, the Sioux queen."

"I met her, you remember," said Hazel.

"Ah, yes; well, she came with her father the evening following the fight, to thank me for saving her, and, seeing my condition, they have devoted themselves to me ever since, and have more than repaid the debt of gratitude which they considered they owed to me."

"The medicine chief has great skill, for I have heard that the surgeons at the fort have availed themselves of his herb medicine in sickness and wounds."

"Yes, he is a wonderful doctor, and I confess that in a hospital I could not have convalesced as I have; but let Red Dove get you some supper, Miss Hazel."

"Thank you, no; I must return at once, but if at any time you feel that you would care to have the nursing of palefaces instead of redskins, you have but to send for me, and I will come with Black Peter and Nance."

"It is very kind of you, Miss Hazel, but within a week or two I will be on my feet."

"Mr. Cody, as I came up the hill, I saw a strange form, which glided rather than walked, going along the plateau toward the cañon.^{11.b}

"It had a peculiar light about it that showed distinctly, even in the darkness, and were I a believer in the supernatural, I would take solemn oath that I had seen a ghost."

"It is my ghost, Miss Hazel."

"Your ghost?"

"Yes, I guess it's mine, for nobody else claims it."

"What do you mean, Mr. Cody?"

"You know this ranch is said to be haunted?"

"Yes."

"Well, to be haunted, a ghost must be around, and that is the spook, spirit or witch."

"You have seen it, then?"

"Often, and Blackfoot and his daughter had just seen it when you rode up."

"It is most strange."

"It is, indeed; but some fine night I am going ghost-hunting, and if I capture it, you may have it for a pet."

"Oh, Mr. Cody, don't talk that way, for it is awful to jest about such things."

He saw that the sight of the ghostly form had really impressed the maiden, and continued:

"Don't fear—it is some trick to scare me away from here."

"But who could play such tricks?"

"That's what I intend some day to find out, Miss Hazel."

Hazel made no reply, but, bidding Buffalo Bill good-by, turned and left the cabin, Blackfoot bringing her horse to the door and raising her to the saddle with the grace of a soldier.

Wondering why Red Dove had not shown herself, she rode down the steep path, to suddenly draw rein as she reached the lowlands, for a form stood in her path.

"Who are you?" asked Hazel, firmly, and she drew the revolver which she never went without.

"Only an Indian girl, poor Red Dove, a Sioux maiden, who begs you not to steal the heart of the great white chief from her."

The words were softly spoken, the tone plaintive, but Hazel replied coldly:

"I seek the heart of no one unmasked, Red Dove."

"Stand aside and allow me to pass."

"The Red Dove has begged the rich, beautiful paleface maiden not to break her heart; next time she will not beg, but act."

The tone was now haughty, and she stepped aside with this threat, and Hazel rode on, a weight upon her heart.

And Red Dove, hoping, dreading, loving and revengeful, returned to the cabin and her post by the side of the wounded paleface, whom she idolized with all the intensity of her passionate nature.

CHAPTER VII.

CAUGHT NAPPING.

As Buffalo Bill had hoped, he was on his feet in a couple of weeks, and within a month was what he called a well man, though he was yet weak, and his wounds had not all healed.

But he was able to dismiss his kind nurses, and Blackfoot and Red Dove returned to their village, the maiden with a heavy heart, for no word of love had been breathed to her by the man she had so tenderly nursed.

Several days after the visit of Hazel Hart to the cabin, Bricktop had put in an appearance, bringing with him many little things he had purchased, which he thought Bill would need, and a budget full of news.

Among his revelations, he said:

"Ther vigilantes hev concluded ter let yer alone, as they says they does admire a man of uncommon pluck, but I thinks it are b'cause they are afraid o' yer.

"Ther cap'n says yer is a whole team and a horse to let, with a fifth wheel thrown in, an' he are yer friend; but that assertion o' his'n makes me watch him ther more, as he are a slippery fox, yer bet, pard.

"Waal, he are two pussons, I is sartin, or he kin be in two places at ther same time, as ther were a big horse-stealin' goin' on up country a few days ago, an' a gang o' rancheros come down to Satan's Mine hot, fer they said ther vigilantes hed did it, fer Dare Devil Don were at their head.

"But thar were Devil Don laid up with fever, and then they see their mistake.

"But I is watchin', an' I hopes ter catch ther weasel asleep yit, pard."

"Do so, and I'll give you five hundred dollars."

"Make it four hundred, pard Bill, fer five hundred are ther sum I put on another man's check once, an' it hain't a luck number fer me."

"Well, I'll give you what you like if you can corner him; but don't fail to watch close whether any move is made against the Hart Ranch, as I fear they will try that same game over."

"I'll do it."

"Now, I wish you to buy in Satan's Mine for me a Colt's repeating rifle, for me to give Blackfoot, and a

pair of the finest small revolvers you can find for Red Dove."

"It'll tickle 'em same as they'd swallowed a feather."

"They deserve them for their kindness to me; there is my purse; take what money you want, and bring them to me on your next visit."

"If you need any money for yourself, take it, for you are welcome."

"Pard, yer is ther whitest man in these parts, and yer is makin' a Christian out o' me."

Helping himself to what he needed for the purchases, and a little for a stake for himself, he left the cabin and wended his way back to town.

But two days after, he returned with the firearms, and they were better than Buffalo Bill had expected Satan's Mine could produce.

To say that Blackfoot and Red Dove were delighted would be to poorly express their feelings, for they were so pleased that Bricktop whispered:

"Didn't I tell yer 'twould tickle 'em?"

"Why, you'd think ther old red hed swallowed a pound o' feathers."

And thus the days passed away at the Haunted Ranch, and the nights revealed the never-failing-to-appear ghost on its regular walk.

But, though Deathgrip had learned to regard its coming without emotion, neither Blackfoot nor Red Dove could bring themselves to look upon it again.

A month passed, and the two faithful nurses returned to their village in the mountains, far away, having exacted from Bill a promise that he would visit them there, that the braves of the Sioux might look upon a man who, single-handed, had defeated twelve.

Feeling quite himself again, Buffalo Bill looked after his ranch, though for a few days it was very lonely, and the nocturnal ghostly visitant was even a relief to him.

Finding that he was able to ride a long distance, he determined to start on the following day for Satan's Mine to prosecute his inquiries about the Don's double, and to purchase a supply of stores, together with a few more cattle and horses.

He had already trained Deathgrip to go and drive up any horse he wanted from the valley, and determined to make an early start, he called to the dog, and said:

"Hi, Grip! go after Noble!"

The intelligent dog bounded away, and, lowering the stockade in the cañon for him, Buffalo Bill returned to his cabin.

But, as he stepped in the door, he suddenly beheld half-a-dozen revolvers thrust in his face, and heard the stern words:

"Buffalo Bill, you are my game!"

CHAPTER VIII.

AN OLD REVENGE.

Buffalo Bill, who had been absent fifteen minutes from the cabin, had little dreamed of confronting a foe, as his eyes had not been off the steep and only approach up the hillside.

Caught napping, as it were, yet he did not lose his presence of mind for an instant, but said, calmly:

"Well, you've fairly caught me, and if I mistake not I am the prisoner of Robin Red Breast, the renegade?"

"You are; but you do not recognize me under my warpaint."

"I can see only that your heart is as red as your paint. Who are you, and what do you want with me?"

"That you shall know when I have you safe in my camp.

"Hold out your hands."

Buffalo Bill quietly obeyed, for there were four revolvers covering him, held in red hands, which he well knew were not painted.

Instantly upon the wrists Robin Red Breast slipped a pair of steel handcuffs.

"You go well supplied, and keep up some of your ideas of civilization," sneered Bill.

"Yes, these are better than ropes, as I have cause to know myself."

As the renegade spoke, he took a lariat and securely bound the hands to the belt, removing the revolvers and knife.

"Now, Bill Cody, you come with me without trouble," he said.

"Certainly."

They led him from the cabin, along the cliff a few paces, and then Bill saw how they had gotten to the cabin.

Over the cliffs hung a couple of stout lariats, showing that they had descended that way.

"Ah, if I had caught you what nice pistol practice I'd have had," he said.

"But you didn't catch us; but I know that if you had our days would have been numbered, for, from all reports, you deserve the name of Dead Shot."

"That was a fierce fight of yours, Cody."

"Yes; and our little affair when I took Red Dove from you, wasn't a slow one, renegade."

"Not very."

"You made good time getting off."

"By the Lord! I had to," said the Red Breast, with a laugh.

"As you've been wounded, I'll hoist you gently," he said.

"Do you intend to hang me?"

"You take it cool. No, we intend to raise you to the top of the cliff, and carry you off to my mountain den."

"I am honored in being your guest, Red Breast," sneered Bill.

The renegade made no reply, but ordered two men to fasten the lariats firmly around Bill's waist, and hauled some one on the top of the cliff.

Instantly, two painted visages looked over.

"Draw him up," he ordered in the Sioux tongue, and Bill arose in midair, and was safely landed on the cliff.

Dropping the lariats over again, the Red Breast and his four Indian braves followed, and Bill saw that he was in the power of the Red Breast and a score of redskin warriors.

"You see," said Robin Red Breast, as he observed Bill glancing over the crowd, "I had heard of your whipping a dozen whites, so I came with a score of reds for you to try your hand upon."

"If I was in the same place, and armed as then, I'd try it on with you before I submitted," was the reckless reply.

"I don't doubt it, for you have a way of avoiding death, and have reduced killing to a science."

"As a boy, you began well in taking life."

"Who the deuce are you, or were you when you were at home?" said Bill, striving to recall where they had met before.

"Do you remember when you were on the pony trail?"

"Yes."

"You prevented the stage carrying treasure from being robbed one night."

"Yes."

"You killed two of the party, but one got away."

"Ha! You are Captain Clement, the former road agent?"

"I was Calvin Clement, Bill Cody, but I am now Robin Red Breast, the renegade chief of the Dog-Soldier Sioux."

"Yes, and with a blacker heart than any red in the band," said Bill, fearlessly.

"We'll not discuss that, sir; the stage company treated me badly——"

"When you stole from them."

"They treated me badly, I say, and I sought to get even with them; and would have gotten a clean thirty thousand in gold but for you."

"I bear your bullet mark in my cheek, but I got away, and swore some day to be avenged on you,

and, as you took from me the other day a captive, I have two scores to settle with you."

"I don't scare worth a cent, Robin Red Breast."

"Oh, I know you've got nerve, and I know you are a giant in strength, and a dead shot, but you are in my power now, and nothing on earth can save you."

"While there's life, there's hope, old man."

"Come, I will not parley with you."

Far back from the cliff they found horses awaiting them, and, mounting these, they rode away toward the stronghold of the white renegade chief.

CHAPTER IX.

REDSKIN TRAILERS.

As Buffalo Bill was in midair, being hauled over the cliff, the eyes of two persons were upon him.

These two sat upon their horses half-way up the steep path leading to the cabin, and were concealed by a thicket from the view of those on the cliff.

They had been coming to the ranch, and their ponies carried heavy loads of what appeared to be the dressed skins of buffalo, bear and other wild animals.

One of the riders was a young warrior, with a face not as red in hue as the full-blooded Indian, and there was about him an air of calm repose and a nobility seldom seen in a redskin.

He was fancifully attired, wore one eagle feather to denote his first rank as chief, and sat his horse with conscious power.

The other the reader has before seen, for it was Red Dove, the Sioux queen, and the young warrior was her brother, Iron Eyes.

Together they were coming to visit the great white scout, and arrived in time to see him made prisoner, and by whom they well knew, for they recognized Robin Red Breast.

Awaiting till they were certain the Indians had gone with their captive, they approached the cabin just as Grip came dashing up with Noble before him.

The dog missed his master at once, and seemed to realize that something had happened, but, devoted to Red Dove, he waited for her to take the initiative in finding him.

In their joy at the capture of Buffalo Bill and their haste to get away in safety with their captive, the Dog-Soldier Sioux had disturbed nothing, not even the weapons of the ranchero, which Robin Red Breast had taken from him and laid on the table.

It was getting dark, and the brother and sister determined at once to follow the Dog-Soldiers, and trust to strategy to get the captive away, as they knew that force would accomplish nothing.

Of course, in the darkness they could not follow the trail themselves, but Red Dove thought of Deathgrip, and at once it was decided to, in some

way, reach the top of the cliff, and this was done by shooting an arrow to which a string was attached, over the trunk of a tree growing near the edge.

To the end of the string a couple of lariats, tied together, were attached, and then were drawn over the limb, and, sailor-fashion, up to the top went Iron Eyes, with the greatest of ease.

Next followed Deathgrip, who submitted to being harnessed in the ends of the lariats, and was safely drawn to the top, greatly to his delight, for he did not relish his trip in mid-air in the least.

Red Dove then followed, and it was decided that she and Deathgrip should follow the trail, while Iron Eyes, mounted on a fresh horse from the valley corral, and leading Noble and an animal for Dove, should ride around the mountain and meet her on the other side.

The horses had already been caught, the Indians' saddles transferred to their backs, and Buffalo Bill's elegant Mexican saddle and bridle put on Noble, and the young warrior started, having thrown the presents from his sister and himself to the ranchero into the cabin and locked the door securely.

It was a long ride round, but Iron Eyes reached the designated point at midnight, and found Red Dove awaiting him there, with Deathgrip.

"The Dog Sioux have passed and kept straight on," she said.

"We will rest and have supper and follow," her brother answered, and two hours after they were again on the trail, Deathgrip following the scent unerringly.

Before dawn they entered the mountains, in which they knew was the stronghold of Robin Red Breast, and here they halted until daylight.

With the first streak of dawn they resumed their way, and, after a ride of a couple of leagues, knew that the camp must be very near.

Seeking a secluded retreat in the very fastnesses of the mountains, Iron Eyes left his sister, Deathgrip and the horses there, while he went off alone on a scout.

She knew that there was no better trailer, or braver warrior in the tribe, and feared not to trust him, and lay down to rest.

But, within several hours he returned, and told her that he had gained a point where he could see the whole village of the Dog-Soldier Sioux, from the top of a huge pine tree which he had climbed.

The prisoner he had distinctly seen led into the council tepee, and that meant, as he well knew, that within three days he must die.

Red Dove seemed, for a moment, almost crushed by the news, but after thinking a while she said:

"Will my brother Iron Eyes enter the Dog Sioux village for me?"

The young warrior looked surprised at her strange request, but answered promptly:

"The Iron Eyes will."
 "He can go with his lance at rest and his head bent."
 "As a warrior that bears a peace message?"
 "Yes."
 "He will go."
 "Let him tell the Robin Red Breast that the Red Dove will be his captive if he will set free the great white hunter."
 "No, the Red Dove shall not," said the young warrior, firmly.
 "Then she will go herself."
 "No, Iron Eyes will go; but why should the Red Dove give herself to the wicked Robin?"
 "She loves the white hunter."
 "The Robin Red Breast will make a dog of her."
 "No, she will not remain with him."
 "The Iron Eyes cannot see," said the mystified warrior.
 "She will spread her wings, and fly back to her people."

The warrior shook his head, dubiously.
 "Yes, she will never be the squaw of the Robin."
 "The Iron Eyes will go," said the young warrior, placing perfect faith in his sister, and, rising, he equipped himself for his dangerous errand, and departed for the village of the Dog-Soldier Sioux.

CHAPTER X.

THE RED DOVE'S SACRIFICE.

When Buffalo Bill had been carried to the mountain village of the renegade chief, he was, after a while, placed in the council tent of the tribe, there to remain until Robin Red Breast devised some torture by which to slowly kill him, for his crimes having made him fly to the worst band of Indians for refuge, he had become more devilish in his cruelty than the savages themselves.

Rejoicing in having his old enemy, against whom he had sworn vengeance, wholly in his power, he wished to have his mind tortured as to what would be his fate, enjoying the prisoner's suffering as the cruel cat does the efforts of the mouse to escape from her merciless claws.

He had thrown himself down to rest, after enjoying a hearty breakfast, following his return, when he was aroused by a warrior, who reported a stranger having come into the village, with bowed head, and white feathers on his lance-head.

"A Cheyenne?" asked the Red Breast.
 "No, a Sioux of Blackfoot's people," was the answer.

"Lead him here," and the Red Breast put on his chief's bonnet, and bedaubed his face with warpaint to receive him.

It was Iron Eyes, and he entered the presence of

the renegade chief with the humble step of one who had come on a mission of peace.

Robin Red Breast eyed the young warrior closely, and said:

"You are Iron Eyes?"
 "The chief speaks straight."
 "The son of Blackfoot, the Sioux chief."
 "Yes, chief."
 "Why do you come here, when the warpaint is on the faces of your people and mine?"

"My lance has its paint covered with white feathers."

"True, and that protects you; but what would the Blackfoot with me?"

"The Blackfoot knows not of my coming; but the Iron Eyes would know if the Robin Red Breast would like to have in his power the Red Dove?"

"Ha!"
 With this exclamation, the eyes of the renegade fairly blazed with exultation.

He had loved the Red Dove, and sought her love two years before, when he was a chief with Blackfoot's tribe; but she refused him with disdain, as she hated him.

In revenge he had kidnaped her, and sought to take her to the Dog-Soldier Sioux band, which he had made up his mind to join.

But Iron Eyes himself, although a mere boy, had pursued and retaken his sister, and the renegade had been forced to fly to the Dog Sioux, who warmly welcomed him, and soon after made him their chief.

Going in disguise to the settlement, he met Hazel Hart, visiting her father, as a Texas cattleman, and at once sought to gain her love.

But she met his advances coldly, and he swore revenge, and, being in league with another rejected suitor of hers, entered into the devilish plot to place the Red Dove in his power, if he would give him possession of Hazel, whom he intended to force into a marriage with him for a purpose which shall yet be revealed.

But the ally was also playing him false, and the plots of the two were overthrown by the rescue of the two maidens by Buffalo Bill.

Not knowing that this ally meant treachery toward him, he thought if he could gain possession of Red Dove, he would place Hazel in his power as an exchange, and to this end he was working, and felt that to get Buffalo Bill out of the way would be a long step toward its accomplishment.

He was therefore delighted when the Iron Eyes suggested his getting possession of the Red Dove, and after a few moments' thought, answered him:

"Yes, I would like the Red Dove, the Sioux queen."

"The Robin Red Breast can have her."
 "Does the Iron Eyes mean it?"
 "The Iron Eyes has no crooked tongue."

"Ah! well, you want something in return?"

"Yes."

"I knew it; what does the Iron Eyes want?"

"The Robin Red Breast has a prisoner?"

"Many of them."

"One known as a great white hunter?"

"Ah! who does the Iron Eyes mean?"

"The Dead Shot Chief."

"The devil! how did the Iron Eyes know this?"

"He has eyes."

"So I see, and good ones, too, to make this discovery almost as soon as I knew it myself."

"Well, what of the Dead Shot?"

"The Iron Eyes will give him the Red Dove for the Dead Shot Chief."

The renegade started visibly.

He bent his piercing eyes upon the young warrior as though to read his inmost soul.

There was something in all this he could not understand.

The young Sioux offering to give up his beautiful sister for the possession of Buffalo Bill.

"Why does the Iron Eyes make this offer?" he asked.

"Why should the Robin wish to read the heart of the Iron Eyes?" was the calm response.

The renegade was silent for a few moments.

To get Hazel into his power by his own efforts he knew to be almost impossible, for his warriors would not follow him as far into the settlements as the Hart Ranch, and had disliked even going after Buffalo Bill.

But with the Red Dove his captive, he could get possession of Hazel, he thought, through an exchange with his ally, and he felt assured that Bill, if free, would return to the Haunted Ranch, and his chance for revenge upon him would only be put off for a short time.

So he decided upon the exchange of his prisoner for the Red Dove, and said:

"When will the Iron Eyes make this exchange?"

"To-night."

"Where?"

"At the Willow Creek."

"At what point?"

"The Buffalo crossing."

"At what hour?"

"When the night turns."

"Midnight, you mean?"

"Yes, chief."

"I will be there with the prisoner."

"The Robin Red Breast must come alone with the prisoner."

"Does the Iron Eyes take me for a fool?"

"The Robin will remember that the Willow Creek runs between hills, with prairie a pony's run on either side."

"Yes."

"He will leave his warriors in the hills, and come alone with the hunter to the creek."

"Yes."

"The Iron Eyes will come alone from the hills with the Red Dove."

"I see."

"Does the Iron Eyes speak straight?"

"As straight as any Injun can speak, for you'd make a fox envious with your cunning, but the Robin will be there with the hunter if you say at noon to-morrow."

The young Sioux questioned with a look, why, in the daytime.

"Because," said the renegade, understanding him, "the darkness covers a multitude of sins, and may cover a multitude of your father's warriors."

"Say noonday, and I'll be there."

"The Robin Red Breast has spoken, and the Iron Eyes will be there with the Red Dove," and, refusing the hospitality offered him, the young Sioux left the village, where hundreds gazed longingly upon his scalplock.

CHAPTER XI.

THE START.

That Buffalo Bill was greatly surprised the following morning after his arrival in the Dog Sioux camp to be told to mount a horse and leave the village there can be no doubt, for he knew well that his foe intended to put him to death, yet did not relinquish hope.

His guards led him to the head of a band of two hundred horsemen, where Clement, the renegade chief and his old foe, awaited him.

He was bound to his horse, and his wrists still wore the steel cuffs.

Robin Red Breast nodded as he came up, and said, as he moved forward, his warriors following:

"You were born under a lucky star, Bill Cody."

"So I've found out, and you under a dog star, which is a sure sign that you'll some day be hanged."

The renegade smiled away the frown that came to his brow at the words, and said:

"I have been torturing my brain to find the best torture to put you to."

"Well, what have you decided upon?" was the cool reply.

"I first thought I would tie you to a stake and burn you."

"That's an old style of refined Indian cruelty; but I should think a man like you could find something more terrible."

"So I thought, as the flames would soon kill you."

"Then I thought that if I tied you on the back of a mustang, and turned you loose in the mountains,

the wolves would run you down and tear you to pieces."

"Yes, that would be enjoyable, for you—and the other wolves."

"No; for I would not see your misery."

"I forgot; what next did you decide upon?"

"To give you up."

"Give me up?"

"Yes."

"To what?"

"To your friends."

"Who, for instance?"

"The Sioux."

"Do as you please; you know I am not interested," said Bill, calmly, though a ray of hope flashed through his heart.

"There is to be a bargain, though."

"Ah! what do the Sioux consider me worth?"

"The Red Dove."

"What!" and Buffalo Bill's face paled.

"They are to give me the Red Dove for you."

"Never."

"I say yes."

"And I say I will never consent to it."

"Oh, yes, you will."

"I will not, Clement, you base hound of hell!"

"You will not be asked."

"I will not allow it."

"You are in irons, and bound securely; if you say more, I'll gag you, and the Sioux will simply take the lariat of your horse, and lead him away with you on his back, while I do the same with Red Dove."

"Curses on you, renegade that you are, I will tell her not to submit, and——"

The chief suddenly turned toward him, and placed his hand upon his shoulder, while he called to his warriors near to aid him in gagging the prisoner.

This was done with the aid of pieces of buckskin and blanket being wrapped around a stick, which was placed in his mouth, and a strap fastened behind his head held it there firmly.

At first Buffalo Bill thought of struggling, but he knew it would do no good; and he kept quiet, submitting to his fate.

On they rode, and the renegade chief went on:

"You should have kept your tongue still, Cody; but forewarned is forearmed, and now you will be quiet, and the exchange will be made; yet why the Red Dove makes this sacrifice I cannot understand."

"As it is, I'll not bother my head about finding out, so that I get possession of her."

"Now, yonder is our meeting-place, and here I will leave my warriors when it is time for us to go and meet our friends."

Calling to two of his warriors, the cunning chief bade them ride from the hills where they were, across

the three miles of prairie to Willow Creek, and reconnoiter up and down for a mile to see that there were no foes concealed there.

For two hours all awaited the return of the warriors, whose movements were plainly visible as they approached the fringe of willows bordering the creek.

Then they were seen to go, one up, the other down, and disappear from view.

But again they appeared, and returned at a gallop to their friends, and reported not a soul in sight.

As no one could leave the opposite hills, and cross the few miles that intervened to the creek, without being seen, the renegade seemed to fear no treachery, and, taking the rein of his prisoner's horse, started toward the Buffalo crossing, which was the designated spot of Iron Eyes.

As the two left the hillside, they beheld two persons leave the opposite range, and, with his glass, Robin Red Breast recognized the young warrior and Red Dove. He smiled in anticipation of triumph, for he had laid a plan of deviltry to be carried out when they should meet among the willows.

CHAPTER XII.

AMONG THE WILLOWS.

Once upon the level prairie, the Robin Red Breast and Buffalo Bill lost sight of the two Indians, but the former had arranged with his warriors for signals should any treachery be noticed, and he saw nothing to cause him to suspect that more than Red Dove and her brother were coming to meet him.

It was a half-hour's ride to the willows, at the Buffalo ford, and the first to arrive were Robin Red Breast and his prisoner. Halting at the bank of the creek, they awaited the coming of the others, glimpses of whom now and then could be seen through the trees.

Presently they appeared on the opposite bank, and the renegade, holding tight to the rein of the prisoner's horse, crossed the ford to meet them.

"Well, the Iron Eyes has spoken truly, and the Robin Red Breast is glad to greet the Red Dove."

The maiden made no reply, but looked stern and calm, as she glanced quickly at the prisoner, and, seeing that he was securely bound and gagged, asked coldly:

"Does the Red Breast fear even to hear the white hunter's voice?"

"No, but he swore that he would not consent to the exchange, so I gagged him to silence him."

"Let the Red Dove understand; the Iron Eyes told the Red Breast he would give the Red Dove for the Dead Shot?" and she rode close up to the renegade.

"He did."

"What wants the Red Breast with the Red Dove?"

"The Robin Red Breast loves the Red Dove," was the evasive reply.

"And why sought the Robin the white hunter?"

"For revenge!" savagely said the renegade.

"And he loves the Red Dove well to give up his revenge for her?" she inquiringly said.

"Yes."

"The Iron Eyes made this bargain?"

"He did."

"The Robin Red Breast is the prisoner of the Red Dove."

Quick as a flash of lightning she raised the hand that had been hanging in the folds of her buckskin shirt, and the muzzle of a revolver was pressed hard against the head of the renegade.

Clement was a man of undoubted nerve, and possessed of great courage, and not a movement did he make, as he saw that his life would be the forfeit.

He knew the girl, and he saw that she had him dead if he moved, and that her act was as great a surprise to her brother as it was to him and to Buffalo Bill, as the expressions on their faces plainly indicated.

In his belt were his revolvers, but one hand held his reins, the other had hold of the lariat that held the prisoner's horse, and he dared not drop one or the other, as the shot must follow that would end his days.

The tableau lasted for only a moment, and then the renegade said in an injured tone:

"The Red Dove has broken faith with the Robin."

"The Robin speaks with a crooked tongue, for the Red Dove made no compact with him."

"The Iron Eyes went to the Red Breast, and asked if he would exchange the hunter for the Red Dove, and he agreed to meet the Robin here."

"The Iron Eyes believed the Red Dove meant to give herself into the power of a snake, but she would have done so only to save the hunter from death."

"She came here prepared to take the Robin, if in her power, and he is her prisoner."

"Let the Iron Eyes bind the Robin Red Breast."

The young warrior, who seemed now to be thoroughly swayed by his sister, quietly dismounted, threw the coil of his lariat over the shoulders of the renegade, and quickly had his arms secured.

"Now, let the Iron Eyes find the key to the iron ropes on the white hunter's wrists," said Red Dove, calmly.

Iron Eyes soon drew the key of the steel handcuffs out of the saddle-pocket of the renegade, and instantly released Buffalo Bill of his gag, irons and bonds.

"The Dead Shot is free now, and the Robin Red Breast is his prisoner," softly said the Red Dove,

now lowering her weapon from the head of the renegade, who had become very pale at her words.

With an effort Buffalo Bill spoke, from the effects of the gag in his mouth, but, swallowing a few cupsfuls of water from the creek, he regained his voice, and said:

"I thank the Red Dove from my heart, but, as the Robin Red Breast trusted in the word of the Iron Eyes, and came here, I cannot harm him, but would say, let him go."

"He is the Dead Shot's bitter foe."

"True, and I am his, and will show him no mercy if we meet in fair combat, but now I cannot take his life."

"The Dead Shot has a good heart, and is a great chief," said the Red Dove, fully understanding Buffalo Bill's reasons for not taking advantage of his foe.

"Yes, Cody, you are a square man, and I bury the hatchet between us for those words," said the renegade, with real feeling and warmth.

Buffalo Bill smiled, and replied:

"I leave the hatchet unburied, Clement, and may the best man win should we meet again."

"Now, for the safety of the brave Indian maiden, as your going alone upon the prairie would bring upon her your pack of howling red wolves, I will leave you tied here until she and her brother can make good their escape."

At these words, Red Dove beckoned to Buffalo Bill to approach, and said:

"Up the creek three miles is your horse; the Iron Eyes has your arms in his blanket, and we can reach there, and that will give us a long start, and the Dog Sioux will not dare to follow us far."

Buffalo Bill then turned to the renegade and said:

"Robin Red Breast, I'll tie you here, but if you are smart and have patience you can untie yourself in half-an-hour, and then go after your red hounds, and put them on our trail; but I warn you if you ride far toward the settlements the rancheros will make this country too hot for you."

Buffalo Bill then set to work and skillfully bound the renegade, so that he would have hard work to undo the knots in less than an hour's time, and then, mounting his horse, he said:

"Clement, you know that I owe this girl my life, for I know you would have killed me, and I warn you that if harm befall her, I shall dog your trail like a bloodhound, and by the worst torture I can invent for such a wretch to die by, you shall end your days."

Without another word, he rode away on the mustang he had ridden there, while upon either side was Iron Eyes and Red Dove, the latter's face bright with joy at her clever and successful ruse to free the man she so madly loved.

CHAPTER XIII.

UNLOVED.

As the two Indians and Bill rode away, the renegade was the picture of fury, for he felt how cleverly he had been mastered at his own game of treachery.

He had intended to deliberately shoot the Iron Eyes dead, as soon as he could get near him, and also the horse ridden by Red Dove, and this would give him the much-coveted scalp of the young chief, place the maiden in his power, and leave his foe, Buffalo Bill, still at his mercy.

But Red Dove's daring had thwarted this treachery, and he was left to nurse his rage and untie his bonds.

At a swift gallop, and keeping well within the shelter of the willows, the three rode up the creek, and within half-an-hour's ride came to where Noble was awaiting them, with the faithful Deathgrip lying down near by.

The joy of Deathgrip at the sight of his master was unbounded, and Noble also recognized the one who had so long been his companion. Buffalo Bill seemed deeply touched at again meeting his dumb pets.

But they did not tarry longer than for Bill to mount Noble and transfer all the equipments not needed by the three to the back of the mustang which the renegade had mounted his prisoner upon, little dreaming that the pony would become that prisoner's property.

Riding out then from the willows, it was some time before the Dog-Soldier Sioux despaired them upon the prairie.

But with miles start, they had little to fear from pursuit, and rode at a swift gallop toward the mountains.

Looking back, they saw that the Dog Sioux were greatly excited for a while, and then, in a body, started for the buffalo ford on the creek.

They had gotten half-way there, when the fugitives saw a horseman dash out from the willows, and ride toward the warriors.

It was the renegade, and he was gesticulating wildly as he rode.

At last he reached the band, a halt was called, and then all came on in pursuit of the fugitives, who now had ample time to cause them no need to press their horses.

After reaching the ford, and discovering that his foes had disappeared in the foothills, Robin Red Breast realized the uselessness of pursuit, and turned his band homeward, for he had no desire to bring the allied forces of the settlers and Blackfoot down upon him, which would drive him to the plains and mountains further north.

Seeing that Red Robin had wisely given up the

chase, the fugitives drew their horses down to a walk, and headed for the village of the chief, Blackfoot, half-a-hundred miles distant, where Buffalo Bill had consented to go at the urgent request of his red friends, who had so nobly served him.

It was late in the night when they rode into the village, but the Blackfoot was aroused and gave his former patient, and now his guest, a warm welcome among his people, and a tepee was placed at the service of the visitor, where he soon fell asleep, in the midst of a tribe that only a short while before had been his bitter enemies, and longed to take his scalp.

The following morning Buffalo Bill met the Sioux chiefs, and was an object of admiration to them, and the envy of every young warrior in the village, for all had heard of his desperate deeds, and that he bore a charmed life, while Blackfoot had told his people that the great white hunter fearlessly dwelt in a ranch haunted by "shadows" from the happy hunting grounds, a circumstance that made them regard him with reverence and awe, as one favored by the Great Spirit.

After a few days' stay in the village of Red Dove's people, and in which Deathgrip also came in for the greatest admiration, as well as his master, for he would not notice any Indian dog in the tribe, Buffalo Bill bade farewell and started home for his lonely and ghost-haunted ranch.

Red Dove and Iron Eyes accompanied him several miles upon his way, but at last the maiden came to a halt, and with tears in her eyes held out her hand in farewell.

With real emotion, Buffalo Bill grasped her hand, and told her how much he thanked her, and that she would be his Indian sister, and Iron Eyes his red-skin brother, and for them to come to him when they needed his aid.

But not one word of love spoke he to the redskin maiden, and with a heart full of bitterness, she went back to her people, the truth forcing itself upon her at last that she was not beloved by the man for whom she would gladly give up her very life.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE VIGILANTE CAPTAIN URGES A CLAIM.

Several days after the capture of Buffalo Bill by Robin Red Breast, Hazel was surprised at seeing a horseman ride up to the ranch. She recognized him as the one she had most cause to fear.

"Say that I do not care to see Captain Don," said she to old Nance.

The message was duly conveyed by the negress to the vigilante captain, who was attired in his best, and looked the exceedingly handsome man he was.

"Please say to Miss Hart, Nance, that I desire to

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

see her upon a most important matter, and beg that she will grant me an interview," replied the captain.

The message was conveyed to the maiden, and, wondering, anxious and embittered, she consented to see her visitor.

Entering the pleasant parlor, Hazel bowed haughtily, and remained standing, while the captain rose and greeted her with courtly grace.

"Miss Hart, I am sorry to have urged you to see me, after your message that you were not at home to me, but the truth is, I beg to convince you that I have been grievously wronged by you, and by many," he said, in his soft, winning way.

"I have been so grievously wronged by you, Captain Don, that I wonder you dare show your face before me."

"It is to convince you, Hazel—"

"Miss Hart, if you please," she said, haughtily.

"It was Hazel once."

"Then I believed you to be an honorable man, but now I know you to be stained with dishonor—aye, and upon you rests the blood of my father and brother."

"Hazel Hart, I swear to you that I am not guilty of the crimes of which I am accused," he said, with an earnest frankness that caused her to look him squarely in the face, and for the moment seemingly to believe him.

Observing the advantage gained, he continued in the same low, but earnest, tone:

"Unhappy in my Eastern home, from circumstances which I do not care to relate, I came here to the border, and with what little means I possessed settled myself here as a ranchero.

"I met you and loved you, and I was received as an honored guest by your father and mother; but jealous rivals, on account of my name being similar to an old foe of your father, caused me to be looked upon with suspicion and then with hatred.

"Then came into the neighborhood an outlaw who strangely resembling me, committed a number of crimes for which I was blamed.

"That man I have found was a cousin of mine, between whom and myself there was a remarkable likeness, and he, hating me, has done this to ruin me.

"He it was who had the feud with your kindred, and he it was who killed your brother and your father, and who is now committing crimes, of which I am accused.

"But I am able, thank God, to prove an alibi, and I come to you, begging you, Hazel, that you condemn me not until you know all."

"You, sir, as captain of a band of vigilantes, should assuredly bring this double of yours to the rope's end," she said, coldly.

"I am moving Heaven and earth to do so, Hazel,

and I need only your kind sympathy to aid me in my work."

"Bring your double to justice, and let me see him face to face with you, and then I will humbly beg you to forgive my doubt of you, and my cruel words against you.

"But until I meet that man and yourself face to face, you and I are strangers!"

"Hazel, one word—"

"No, for you know the alternative; go!"

He bowed in his courtly way, turned and left the room, and, as he rode away, Hazel Hart gazed after him, and murmured:

"Yes, I could have loved him once—at least I thought I did; but be he innocent of all wrong, I could not do so now, as in my heart is the image of a man as far above him as an angel is above a devil.

"But how is it that strange man fascinates me?

"He does not love me, for he is a married man, I know. His life is one of continual bloodshed, and the cross he has to bear seems to be to kill his fellow beings.

"And yet I blame him not, for he is all gentleness and kindness, and a bitter fate only makes him what he is.

"Ah me! how different it is with true love, for even were he evil I believe I would love him."

In these words Hazel Hart but expressed the story of a woman's heart.

CHAPTER XV.

A GUEST AT THE HART RANCH.

When Buffalo Bill returned to his Haunted Ranch, he discovered that no stranger had been there to rob or disarrange, and the key was where Red Dove had told him he would find it.

And yet there was evidence that his former ghostly visitant had been playing the same old pranks, as a skeleton form had been taken from the peg where he had hung it outside, and was snugly lying in his bed.

"This cot's to small for you and me, Dry Bones, so git," he said, in his habitually calm way, and the skeleton was returned to the peg outside the cabin, while Deathgrip, as if to urge upon the unsightly object the impropriety of going into his master's bed, sat on his haunches opposite it, and barked until Bill bade him be still, adding:

"Your tail will drop to-night quick enough, Deathgrip, when that chap's cousin comes prowling along on its midnight walk."

"Then you'll be as still as if the bark had all been drawn out of you with a corkscrew."

"Here, go and drive Noble and Renegade to the valley," and by the latter he referred to the mustang

he had ridden from the Dog-Soldier Sioux camp when a prisoner.

Deathgrip readily obeyed, and returned and kept his eye on the cliff as if expecting more trouble from that quarter.

"That's right, old dog, for we were caught napping before, and we must keep our eyes on the watch, or we'll dance a jig in midair yet with a lariat around our necks; but come, let us have supper, and to-morrow we will ride over to Satan's Mine for a day or two, and see what the natives think of us."

The following morning, Buffalo Bill, mounted on his favorite horse and thoroughly armed, locked his cabin and started for the town of Satan's Mine, followed by the faithful bloodhound.

Branching off from the regular course, he went by the Hart Ranch, where Hazel gave him a warm welcome, congratulated him upon his perfect restoration to health, and heard from his lips the story of his late adventure and daring rescue by Iron Eyes and Red Dove.

Hazel patted her foot impatiently at the mention of Red Dove's name, and in her heart she felt deep jealousy of the redskin maiden; but yet she was unable to detect in Buffalo Bill's manner any reason for believing that he loved the Indian girl.

The maiden then told Buffalo Bill of her visit from the vigilante captain, and of his assertion that he was the victim of a conspiracy against him.

"Well, Miss Hazel, he may be," he answered, "but I'll find it out before I leave Satan's Mine, where I am now going."

Hazel tried to persuade him not to go there, as she dreaded trouble; but he was determined, and only consented to remain at the ranch for dinner, instead, as she had hoped, much longer.

The dinner was a masterpiece of culinary art, old Nance having tried herself.

"Fer dat lub of a gemman what sabe Missy Hazel," as she put it.

And Bill enjoyed the meal immensely, and Deathgrip came in for a generous share, for Uncle Peter eyed him closely, and said to Aunt Nance:

"Ol' gal, keep that darn dawg chawing vittles and he won't have time ter luk at us."

"Gor' amighty! hain't he a livin' terrer ter sinners!"

"Yas, honey, he am, an' I am watchin' him, too, an' tends ter keep him chawin', but in case he shu'd git scrumshious, does yer see dat teakittle, ol' man?"

"I does."

"Waal, chile, it are full o' scaldin' water, an' I is keepin' it on ther hottest part o' ther fire, an' thet doggone dog'll get peeled from de nose ter de end ob his tail, ef he opens a growl in dis kitchen, fer he do look as tho' ther devil were inside o' him."

"He do, ol' woman, but keep him feedin', an' he won't growl."

Whether, from having his master talk to him so much, Deathgrip had acquired a knowledge of the Anglo-African tongue, also, and understood what was said, I am unable to state, but certain it is, he suddenly, as Aunt Nance moved toward him with more food, shot out of the door like an arrow, a sudden movement on his part that caused Black Peter to utter a terrified oath, and the old negress to spring for her kettle, believing the time for peeling the dog with scalding water was arrived.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SENSATION IN THE CAMPS.

The sun was just touching the horizon when Buffalo Bill rode into Satan's Mine, at an easy canter, with Deathgrip at the heels of his horse, and presenting a rather formidable party.

Every person along the thoroughfares gazed upon the handsome man, for already was his face well known to many, and from lip to lip flew the rumor that Buffalo Bill, the dead shot, had come to town, and this circumstance gave the lie to many, who had said with all his pluck he would not dare to come there, after having slain many of the band of vigilantes.

Going straight to the Ranchero's Exchange, he put up his horse in the stable, and sauntered carelessly along to Sloan's grocery, Deathgrip keeping close to his heels, and bestowing an ugly look upon any one he met.

Elijah Sloan greeted his customer most cordially, congratulating him upon his healthy appearance, and then in a whisper said:

"You played the devil with the gang that went to hang you, but be careful, for there are three of the thirteen now in town, and there sits one of them now."

"I have not heard him say a word against you, but t'other two I have, and you must watch 'em sharp."

The one referred to as being present, who had been one of the thirteen to attack the cabin, was Bricktop, who was seated over in the loafer's corner of the store.

He had seen Buffalo Bill enter, but had made no remark, and now he saw his recent friend, but pretended foe, advancing toward him.

"You are one of the gang who attacked my ranch, I believe?" said Buffalo Bill, sternly.

"I were, pard, and I are ashamed o' myself fer ther lickin' yer give us," frankly answered Bricktop, who had caught the quiet sign of Bill that he wished to speak to him as soon as he could do so.

"Then you have no quarrel with me, sir?" continued Bill.

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES.

"Nary, pard, fer I are es peaceable es a lamb."

"All right; pard Sloan, put us all up some drinks," and the storekeeper readily obeyed Buffalo Bill's request, and the crowd drank his health with a gusto.

Telling Sloan he would come in and make some purchases before he left town, Bill started up the street to an unfrequented part of the camps, and, walking slowly, he was soon overtaken by Bricktop, who said:

"Pard, yer skeered me durn nigh ter death, fer yer did look mad; but perhaps it are yer nat'ral look."

"I wished to give you a sign to meet me, and knew not how else to do it."

"Now, what have you discovered?"

"Thar is sart'only two o' 'em, an' I've a friend who is goin' ter tell me whar ter find ther double."

"Indeed! this is news; but when will you know?"

"To-morrow sometime."

"Then, if I have left town, come to the ranch, and bring your friend, if you wish."

"I'll do it."

"After I have solved this mystery, I will give you a position on my ranch as head herder, if you will take it."

"Will a baby suck candy, pard?"

"All right, the position is yours; now tell me who has the boss gambling saloon here?"

"Paddy Wells hes ther Palis."

"Then I shall go there to-night; but first I shall go to the Exchange for supper."

"Be on hand at both places, if you can."

"I'll be thar; but look out for Bouncer Brooks."

"The landlord?"

"Thet's him; an' keep your eye open fer ther two that helped make up ther thirteen."

"I will be on my guard."

"An' so will I, fer they shan't do no backslidin' work on yer, pard."

Buffalo Bill laughed lightly, and the two parted.

Straight to the Ranchero's Exchange Bill went. His entrance into the tavern caused a general hum of excitement, for it was now after dark, and the floating crowd had congregated there, anticipating a disturbance, as all Satan's Mine knew now that the dead shot was in town, and were aware of the threats made against his life by many.

Unmindful of the sensation his entrance into the tavern created, Buffalo Bill walked straight up to the counter, nodded to Bouncer Brooks, who stood behind it, picked up a pen to register his name, leaned over the book, and suddenly dropped to the floor, just as there came a pistol's ring behind him, and, with a shriek of agony, the giant landlord sank behind his desk, a bullet in his heart.

"You got my medicine, Bouncer," said Buffalo Bill, as he sprang to his feet, his right hand thrust forward, and in it a revolver.

With the movement came the report, and down

dropped a man in the crowd, the same who had fired the shot meant for Buffalo Bill and fatal to the landlord, whom Buffalo Bill, under his brow, had seen make a motion to some one behind to either fire or hit him, and this had caused him to drop with the rapidity of lightning.

"Are he desd?" cried several voices.

"Why ask?—didn't ther dead shot pull ther trigger?" came an answer.

"Yes, he are dead, an' he got it in his brain," said another.

"An' Bouncer got it in his heart when he were not 'spectin' it."

"Who are he?"

"Number eleven o' ther thirteen."

"Waal, thar are number twelve, as hes been givin' lip as ter what he are goin' ter do when he sees ther dead shot; better send him word thet Buffalo Bill are heur, so as we kin bury 'em both in ther same coffin."

This remark caused a general laugh; but Buffalo Bill had heard all, though he had seemingly been intent on registering his name and that of Deathgrip.

When he had finished, those who glanced at the register read:

Buffalo Bill, Rancher,

Deathgrip,

The Haunted Ranch.

"Come, my man, as the landlord is not here to attend to business, kindly show me to my room," said Bill, calmly, addressing a clerk of the tavern, who readily obeyed.

After making his toilet for supper, Buffalo Bill went to the bar, nodded pleasantly to the barkeeper, who had suddenly, by his act, stepped into the proprietorship of the Ranchero's Exchange, and, turning to the crowd, asked them to join him in a drink—an invitation that was promptly accepted. Then an adjournment was made to the dining-room, where Deathgrip occupied his seat at the table with the dignity of a judge.

Suddenly Buffalo Bill detected a little byplay over in one corner of the room, for he saw a man enter hastily, seize a napkin, waiter and apron, and fastening the latter about him, start for the kitchen.

Watching the door for his reappearance—for Bill had recognized the man as number twelve of the band who had attacked him—he knew that the man was playing a bold game to get behind him and shoot him, knowing that in his disguise as a servant, no one would notice his movements.

But, while sipping his coffee, and with his eye noticing every form and face that passed in and out of the door leading to the kitchen through which his intended assassin had disappeared, Buffalo Bill was suddenly startled by a fierce yelp, and a savage spring from Deathgrip, and the floor shook under the fall of two heavy bodies.

Every one was on his feet in an instant, and there upon the floor lay the would-be assassin, his cocked pistol just fallen from his limp hand, his throat crushed in the jaws of the savage hound, whose quick eyes had caught sight of the man as he came behind his master, and saw in his hand the deadly weapon that was being thrust against his head, and which his instinct told him was meant to harm.

"Let go, Deathgrip, for you have done your work, good dog.

"Here, waiter, give me another cup of coffee, for mine was upset in that little trouble just now, and fetch another steak for my dog," was Bill's cool order, as he resumed his seat at the table, and motioned to Deathgrip to do likewise, while their example was generally followed, few showing commiseration for the assassin, whose neck the iron jaws of the bloodhound had broken.

CHAPTER XVII.

A GAME OF CARDS.

After leaving the supper room, and more than ever an object of interest to Satan's Mine citizens, Buffalo Bill lighted a cigar, and sauntered in the direction of Paddy Well's "Palis o' Fine Arts," as the sign over the door read.

He seated himself at a table in the corner so that no one could "get the drop on him" without his seeing them first, and quickly looked around over the gathering crowd.

Presently the vigilante captain entered, was greeted by a score of welcomes, and spying Buffalo Bill, crossed over to where he sat.

"Good-evening, sir; I am glad to meet you again, and regret that some of my men should have visited you at your ranch," he said, pleasantly.

"I was surprised at not seeing you there," said Bill.

"No; I did not uphold the act, and am glad I was not mixed up in it."

"Yes, I guess it is a subject for congratulation on your part; but would you like to join me in a little game?"

"Yes, if it will entertain you."

"It would, indeed," said Bill, earnestly.

"If you are as good a hand at cards as you are with the pistol, I stand no show," said the vigilante, with a smile.

"All men who have nerve have a show in any game, whether it be for life or for gold," was Bill's significant reply.

All in the room had now centered their interest on the two splendid-looking men who sat at the table together, for they felt that there was mischief lurking beneath the smile of the vigilante captain, and they had discovered enough about Buffalo Bill to know

that Dagger Don, quick on the draw, good shot and man of nerve that he was, might find in the stranger more than a match.

"What will your stake be?" smilingly asked the vigilante.

"Suit yourself."

"One hundred."

"Yes."

The two staked their money and the game was begun.

Buffalo Bill played quickly, yet cautiously, and he won the first game.

Then Dagger Don won three pots in succession, and, betting largely on the fourth, Buffalo Bill won.

The vigilante captain was fretted at his loss, and showed it, but whether losing or winning, his adversary was perfectly cool.

Again they played, and Bill won, and thus it went on until Bill had won largely, and the vigilante said, in angry tones:

"I think it's now about time to put a check on you, for first you stole horses, then killed citizens in our town, and now cheat at cards!"

And from his first word the vigilante had a pistol leveled in the face of Buffalo Bill.

But not the quiver of a muscle showed that Bill either heard the insulting words, or saw the revolver, and a deathlike silence hung upon the crowd.

"Down, Grip!"

The look and words caused the vigilante captain to quickly turn his head, expecting that the ferocious dog was about to spring upon him, for he had heard of the affair at the supper table.

But Grip lay behind his master's chair, sleeping the sleep of the weary, and the words of Buffalo Bill had so well served their purpose that when Dagger Don again glanced at his foe, he saw a pistol in his face, while suddenly an iron hand seemed to clutch his own weapon.

"Dagger Don, or Devil Don, as you like best, you played this game with me to get me into your power, and you insulted me by false accusations, as you know, but I'll not kill you now, but one week from this day I'll meet you in this town between sunrise and sunset—and I warn you to be ready, for I mean business to the hilt."

"I'll meet you, if you're not afraid to come," sneered the vigilante captain.

"I'll be here without fail; good-night, gentlemen."

And Bill quietly arose and left the gambling saloon, the eyes of all following him until the door shut him out of view.

It was still early, and, as Sloan's store was not yet closed, he went there, made his necessary purchases, and mounting his horse, rode out of town on his way homeward, his stern face showing no sign of the emotion he felt at the scene through which he had

just passed, for, with all his lion nature, and desperate courage when aroused, Buffalo Bill's heart was in the right place.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRAILING A GHOST.

The sun was above the horizon when Buffalo Bill rode up to his cabin door and dismounted.

Entering, he saw the same skeleton form in his cot as on the occasion of his other departures from the cabin.

"Well, for a fellow that has slept in a grave, you do love your comfort, I must say," Buffalo Bill muttered, as he once more returned the skeleton to its roost outside.

"How the devil that old rattler gets in my cabin, I don't know.

"There is no other key like this, for I asked Sloan, and the windows are all as I left them, and there are no crevices in the walls.

"Perhaps he came down the chimney?

"No, for he could not get in at the top.

"Grip, I've got a notion to go off again, and leave you in the cabin to tackle the ghosts.

"No, your tail drops at the suggestion, although you will chew up a full-sized man without trouble.

"Well, I'll go ghost-hunting myself to-morrow night, if that ghost tramp shows itself to-night, for it is time that I solved this mystery."

And that night, as before, the ghostly form did appear, and, gliding toward the cañon, was lost to view.

Buffalo Bill calmly watched it disappear, and, returning to his cot, sunk to sleep once more.

The next night, an hour before midnight—the regular appearing hour of the ghostly visitant—he bade Grip lay down in the cabin and await his return.

Then leaving his door open, as was his custom, he glided softly in the direction of the cañon.

Concealing himself behind the stockade barrier, he waited for the coming of the strange form he had so often seen.

Midnight at last came, as he discovered by feeling the hands of his watch, and then he saw the form approaching in the darkness.

It appeared from the direction of the graves in the thicket, where also had been buried by Blackfoot the bodies of the dead vigilantes, and, gliding by the cabin, came directly for the cañon.

As it drew near Buffalo Bill saw that the same weird, greenish light shone on it, and he nerved himself for the coming struggle, as though he were going to face half-a-score of foes.

Nearer and nearer it came until the mouth of the cañon was reached.

Here it came to a halt, turned and seemed to be

looking back at the cabin, and once more came slowly on.

Turning aside before it reached the stockade, it went close to the right wall of the cañon, where the cliff rose over a hundred sheer feet above it, and here it again stopped.

Watching intently, Buffalo Bill saw its arms move, then it seemed rising from the ground bodily, and, with a mighty spring he leaped the barrier and seized the ghostly form in his powerful arms.

A wild cry broke from its lips, and an answering bark came from Deathgrip in the cabin, while Bill said, quickly:

"By Heaven! but you're solid for a ghost, and your lungs haven't been hurt by your midnight prowling."

"Release me!"

The voice was hoarse with fright and passion combined.

"Nary release, my ghostly friend, for I'm ghost-hunting to-night, and 'twon't do to go home without any game, as Grip would never forgive me."

"I say, release me," came again, in hoarse tones.

"Not I, for I've got to see just what you are made of."

"Come. If you cry out, I'll send my knifeblade reaching for your heart," and Bill tried to urge his strange captive on.

But it would not move, and, raising the white-robed form in his strong arms, he carried it straight to his cabin.

At the sight of the ghostly-looking load his master carried, Deathgrip seemed uneasy; but a light was at once struck, the door closed, and Buffalo Bill turned for a fair look at his captive.

"Well, you are a healthy-looking ghost, that's a fact," he said.

But there was no answer from the white-robed form that stood like a statue before the scout.

"Yes, here is your shroud, and this tincup turned bottom-side up, with a green glass on it, and a candle in it, and fastened on your head, made that greenish light."

"Then you are rubbed all over with that cursed herb the Indians use to keep dogs off, and that's what made Grip skip for his hole when he smelt it."

"Well, you weigh just about one hundred and seventy pounds of cussedness, and if you don't wag that tongue of yours, and give me full particulars regarding you, I'll put you where all good ghosts go."

As Bill addressed the ghostly capture he had made he deliberately stripped from it the white robe and spectral equipment, and a tall, well-knit man was revealed, clad in the rough costume of a miner.

In his belt was a knife, his only weapon; he seemed to rely upon his ghostly attire to keep any one at a distance.

His face was dark, evil-looking, bearded and as

allid as a corpse, while he trembled violently, not having recovered from Bill's unexpected spring upon his ghostship.

"Now, who are you?"

"There is no need of telling you, for you do not know me," was the surly answer.

"I will know you, though, and if you don't answer me I'll kill you and turn you over to Grip to pick, and he'll have your bones so clean by morning I can hang you up on the other peg out there."

"Now talk!"

"What do you want to know?"

"Whose ghost are you?"

"I was masquerading for a purpose."

"I'd like to know it."

"I'll give you a handsome sum in gold if you'll let me go," pleaded the prisoner.

"And I'll give you just eight inches of steel between your ribs if you don't talk."

The man saw his captor was not to be trifled with, so he said:

"What shall I say?"

"Who are you?"

"My name is Burke."

"Ah, indeed? You have told the truth, and you're just the man I want."

The prisoner looked surprised, and asked:

"What do you want with me?"

"To hang you, if you don't tell all you know."

"What terms will I get?"

"Death, if you don't!"

"If I do?"

"I'll let you go free when I'm done with you."

"I'll do it."

"You show wisdom; now I'm a boss listener, so tell in."

"There is a mine in this mountain."

"So I thought; how many are working it?"

"Four of us."

"Ah! for how long?"

"Three years the others have been here, but I came six months ago."

"Yes, after a little killing scrape you got into in Kansas City; but how did you manage to find this place?"

"I had a friend here, and he wrote me how to find him."

"And I suppose you have piled up plenty of dust at the mine?"

"We have a snug little sum; but we are about down to bedrock now, and it don't pan out much."

"Who discovered this mine?"

"The first owner of this ranch."

"Ah, yes; and he lost his life suddenly?"

"Yes."

"Who killed him?"

"His chief cowboy."

"And who aided him?"

"Two other cowboys he let into the secret."

"And you have just killed everybody that has come to live here since?"

"Excepting you."

"That's so; and have given out the idea that the place was haunted?"

"Yes."

"And kept all people away?"

"Excepting you."

"That's so; but I am the pard of all ghosts; I have to make so many of them, you know."

"Now tell me who put that notice on my door to quit?"

"We did."

"And who put that skeleton in my cot?"

"I did."

"How did you get in my cabin?"

"There is a secret door in the chimney."

"I'd like to see it."

The prisoner arose and showed that the stucco work of the chimney on one side was ingeniously arranged on a board with hinges, which swung open, disclosing a space large enough to admit a man.

"You are artists, pard," said Bill, in his quiet way.

"It was made by the first owner of this cabin, as a means of getting in by lowering himself from the cliff with a lariat, and, the herder knowing all about it, we used it to frighten you," explained the miner.

"Now, it's funny, but I didn't frighten worth a cent; but tell me, have you four men, just to get the gold in this secret mine, killed all who came here, and played ghost to scare others away?"

"The others have."

"Ah, yes; they did the killing and you played the ghost."

"Now, were you not afraid of being shot?"

"People don't shoot at ghosts, and besides I had to take the chances."

"You took mighty big chances with me, for, if I hadn't thought you were a female ghost, I'd have sent a bullet in you the first night I met you."

"Now, pard, I wish you to guide me to your mine."

"You said I might go free, and if I guided you there they'd kill me."

"I guess not, so come."

The man dared not disobey, and taking up the ghostly robes, Bill went with him out of the cabin, calling Deathgrip to follow, which he did at a distance, not liking the herb with which the white shroud was saturated.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SECRET.

Buffalo Bill, walking close to the side of his prisoner, followed him through the pine thicket, where were the graves of the miners' victims, listening to his story how he had always ascended the cliff by a

lariat he had just lowered after passing the cabin in his ghostly walk.

Passing through the thicket, the prisoner stopped at a tall pine tree, which, he said, must be climbed, and Bill followed him up the trunk, to where a stout limb branched off over a spur of rock, and Grip was left behind.

Along this they went, and a walk of a hundred yards brought them to a cave in an overhanging rock.

"This is the mine, and they are in there working, for we work at night, and sleep by day," whispered the prisoner.

"All right; wait for me here, but, if you attempt to escape, I'll put my bloodhound on your trail, and—"

"I'll wait," quickly said the man.

"See that you do," and, throwing the ghostly raiment over his head and form, Bill stepped into the cave, and, guided by the sound of blows in the rocks, and feeling his way, he soon came within sight of the lights.

There were three men at work digging and several lanterns lighted them at their work.

Near by was piled up a small quantity of the precious metal, which the men had gotten out of the rock with great difficulty, and on one side were the bearskin beds of the miners with a few cooking utensils and a box of provisions.

"Pards, strike work, for I want you," said Buffalo Bill.

At the stern, deep voice, the three miners turned quickly, and their picks fell from their hands at the sight of a white-robed figure before them, and a pair of revolvers covering them.

"Who in natur' are yer?" cried one.

"Life's too short to answer questions, pard, so come here, one by one, and let me fix you so that I'll be sure of you."

"Boys, he are one, and we are three—come!" and the man sprang forward to fall dead.

Terrified at the fate of their comrade, and with the death shot echoing through the cavern, the other two cried for mercy, and one at a time were quickly bound.

"Now, I'll take you to my home and entertain you—come!"

Silently they followed him out of the cavern, and,

seeing their traitor companion without, they cursed him bitterly for his treachery.

But Bill commanded silence, and, lowering them from the cliff, called to Grip, who was patiently waiting at the tree, to watch them, and then followed the unbound miner down to the plateau.

Arriving at the cabin, the three were secured, and telling the bloodhound to keep his eye upon them, Buffalo Bill threw himself upon his cot, and went to sleep as calmly as though no care were upon him.

With the break of dawn he awoke, and found his prisoners all safe, and Grip keeping guard and wide awake.

"Pards, we'll have some breakfast, and then we'll go to Satan's Mine, and I'll turn you over to the citizens for trial, while you, my friend, had better light out, if you wish to save your neck."

The one he had addressed and who was the ghost impersonator, was only too anxious to get away, and, taking his comrades' weapons and an outfit Bill gave him, left the cabin in hot haste.

"It'll not be long before he's mounted on somebody's horse, and he'll get along in the world, pard, so don't you worry about him."

"Any fellow who can play ghost as he did can make a living."

Bill was about to leave Grip as custodian of his captives when he discovered Bricktop coming toward the cabin, and behind him another horseman.

"Pard, heur we is fer a fact, an' I hes got all partic'lers," said Bricktop, and as the two dismounted he added:

"This are my pard, Hank Hutchins, an' he are squar', and he'll tell us a few words of wisdom."

Buffalo Bill greeted the newcomers and then told of his capture of the miners, after which he sat down to hear what Bricktop's friend had to tell.

"Well, pard, Bricktop says you know something of Dagger Don and his double?" said Bill, inquiringly.

"I do," was the quiet response.

"Who is this Dagger Don?"

"His real name is Durke Darrell, and he is a Kentuckian; but he was forced to leave home a few years ago on account of killing and robbing a friend who had a large sum of money."

"He began well."

"He has ended worse, for, though a ranchero, having purchased his stock with the money he got by

his murder and robbery, and the vigilante captain, he is the secret leader of a band of outlaws."

"Ah! his record is improving; now, how is it he manages to be in two places at the same time?"

"He does not; there are two bands he controls—one the vigilantes, some of whom are in his secret, and serve a double purpose, and the other band is that of his outlaws."

"Among these latter is a man strangely like Durke Darrell, and a little disguising and similar dressing makes them more so, for few could tell them apart."

"This man is his lieutenant, and he it is that puzzles the settlers, as to the deeds of the vigilante captain, for he is his perfect slave."

"And where is this lieutenant?"

"He has a camp in the mountains fifteen miles from here."

"You know it?"

"I do."

"May I ask how you found it?"

"I was a member of the band."

"Indeed! you don't look like a villain, but looks are deceiving," said Bill.

"In my case particularly so, for I am a woman."

For an instant Buffalo Bill lost his composure and started, while he asked, amazedly:

"A woman?"

"Yes; for Durke Darrell is my husband, and the man he killed was my brother."

"His crimes made me revengeful, and I have followed his steps, and, tracking him, became a member of his band, at first taking his double for him."

"How to punish him and his band together, I had no idea until I had a talk with Bricktop here, and he brought me to you."

"And what punishment do you wish meted out to Darrell?" asked Bill.

"At first I intended to kill him myself; but now I will not stain my soul with his life. He is too base to live, for he sought to make Hazel Hart his wife; but she refused him, and, learning that an Indian girl, whose mother was a white woman, had inherited a fortune from her grandfather, a Canadian trader, he was anxious to marry her, and thus gain possession of her money."

"To do this, he leagued himself with a wretch, a negade chief of the Dog-Soldier Sioux, who was to kidnap the girl in his power in return for Hazel Hart, against whom he wished to reap revenge."

"But lately learning that Miss Hart, through an aunt's death, is left a large fortune, having seen the letters in reference to her inheritance through robbing the mail, he has now gone back to her, and is trying to prove that he is impersonated by some villain who did her cruel wrong by killing her father and brother, when he was guilty of all, for where his double acted, it was but through his orders."

"Now, you know who and what Dagger Don is," and, as the woman spoke, she removed her beard and wig, and a sad face was revealed to the astonished gaze of Buffalo Bill.

After some further conversation on the subject, Bill learned that Dagger Don, his double, and Robin Red-Breast, were to meet in the mountains at the outlaw retreat in two days, and at once he decided to capture them.

Dispatching Bricktop on a fresh horse to the village of Blackfoot, he gave him a note to Red Dove, whom he knew could both read and write, and the result of this was that the Indian Girl, her brother, Iron Eyes, and fifty Sioux warriors came to the cabin the next day.

In a few words he told Red Dove of her fortune, and she was given the letters which the outlaws had taken from the men who had been sent to seek her, and whom they had killed, and which the deserted wife had saved for her, as also those sent by mail for Hazel Hart.

Under guidance, Buffalo Bill and his party, carrying the two miners with them, sought the outlaw retreat, and Iron Eyes, who had gone on a scout, having reported that both Red-Breast and Dagger Don, accompanied by a few white horsemen and warriors, had passed on into the mountains, they moved cautiously to the attack, and suddenly dashed out upon the surprised and thunderstruck outlaws.

At the head of all went Buffalo Bill, with Death-grip plunging along by his side.

Straight for Robin Red-Breast he rode, and recognizing him, the renegade's revolver flashed with that of his foe.

But his bullet found a target in poor Grip's brain, who sunk without a groan, while Buffalo Bill's aim, ever true, pierced the heart of the cruel renegade.

As if conscious that his work was well done, without looking to see, Bill wheeled and rode down upon Durke Darrell, crying out as he did so:

"This is not Satan's Mine, but we are well met."

The vigilante captain was defending himself against two Indians, but turned at the words of Buffalo Bill to find a revolver pressing at his head, and hear the command:

"Durke Darrell, surrender."

"I can do nothing else," was the sullen reply.

"That's wise of you, for I would hate to cheat the hangman out of a job," and in an instant almost the outlaw chief was securely bound. Coming up to him and gazing into his face, his deserted wife said, with triumph in her tones:

"Durke Darrell, whatever death you die, remember you owe it to me."

"Constance!" he gasped, gazing in horror upon the face, now no longer disguised.

"Yes, I am Constance, your wife—soon to be your widow.

"We shall meet no more on earth. Farewell!"

She mounted her horse and rode slowly away.

Leaving a detail of Indians to bury the dead, among whom was Darrell's double, Buffalo Bill set off with his prisoners to Satan's Mine.

When Bill arrived at Satan's Mine with his prisoners, he had no difficulty in getting them taken off his hands by the enraged citizens, and "Judge Lynch" quickly sat in trial upon them.

The miners were first tried for the murder of the owner of the ranch that had been said to be haunted, and their sentence followed quickly—their execution immediately after.

Then Darrell was tried for his crimes; the proofs against him were damning, and he was strung up to a tree to suffer the penalty of his misdeeds.

To the last he was reckless and vindictive, cursing Buffalo Bill with his last breath.

When the executions were over, Satan's Mine looked so serene, having been cleaned of so many of its evil citizens, that Bricktop remarked:

"They'll be building a Gospel mill here afore long, and hiring a Bible sharp to grind it."

Back to his ranch, no longer haunted, went Buffalo Bill, with Bricktop for his companion, and, gathering together all the gold in the secret mine, which did not pan out so well as was at first believed it would, the noble-hearted ranchero sent it to the heirs of the former owner, whom he knew to be in destitute circumstances.

Red Dove would not leave her people even for a fortune, so remained the Sioux Girl Queen, while

Hazel went East to visit her aunt, and there married an army officer who had often visited her Western home.

Having cleaned out the bad element of Satan's Mine, Buffalo Bill returned to his duties as an army scout, and continued to add to his record as a dead shot, and to make such a name for himself that he will never cease to be remembered as the greatest of the "heroes of the borderland."

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 48) will contain "Buffalo Bill's Secret; or, The Trail of a Traitor." A piece of fine borderland detective work on the part of the great scout—full of exciting adventure.

Tossed By a Bull.

(By Harry Welch, N. Y.)

I was in the habit of visiting my cousin in the summertime. We always used to chase the hens and the rest of the stock around the farm.

One day we were chasing the cows around the yard.

We had the dog with us—he was a pretty faithful old dog.

We were in pretty close quarters. My uncle had a cross bull when he saw us he put after us.

My cousin was near the fence and succeeded in getting over it all right. But I was further away from the fence, and as made a leap for it the bull caught me with his horns and threw me up in the air.

I fell heavily to the ground. My cousin saw my danger and he set the dog on the bull just as he was coming for me again.

Fido, the dog, as he was called, drove the bull off, and as was pretty badly shaken my cousin got me out of the bull's reach. I learned to leave everything alone after that.

A Miner's Story.

(By Glen Martin, Tenn.)

When I was in the mountains last summer, upon asking friend of mine who worked in the mines what was his narrowest escape he promptly spoke as follows:

"Well, my narrowest escape was this: You see, I was working in my room in the mines after all the others had quit, and when I started to go out of the mines I heard a spitting noise and upon looking up I saw a fuse running into a keg of powder, that had been set in a lot of slate to blow it out of the way so a mule could pass.

"I saw quickly that my way was blocked, and so I ran behind a rock to keep from being hit by flying stones. I had hardly gotten behind the rock when the explosion occurred. After waiting for some time for fear of another explosion, stuck my head around a rock.

To my horror, I saw that I could not get out, and as the next day was Sunday—I would have to stay in there until Monday, and as there was not enough air to keep me alive until Sunday I would surely smother. I stood there thinking about the bad things I had ever done, and about what the people would say when they found me dead.

"After a while I thought I heard voices, and I was scared for I thought all the rest had gone, and that the mines were haunted, but in a few minutes I heard somebody shoveling away that slate, and somebody said, 'Bill, are you in there?'

"I yelled, 'Yes!' and ran to where they were.

"While I was in there I thought I had stayed in there until it was at least Sunday, but I found out that I had only been one hour after the explosion."

THRILLING ADVENTURE



Still they come! That's what the editor exclaims every morning when he sees the fresh batch of letters that covers his desk.

The letters come in piles, but still there is a chance for everybody.

For all particulars in regard to this contest look on page 30.

Here are a few of the latest thrillers.

Adventures in the Black Hills.

(By H. Rose, Mo.)

John Westly and I had heard a great deal of the Black Hills and thought we would go. John had a wagon and team. I bought a cover and bows, and we finished our wagon out with everything we needed.

We started July 16, 1900. We got to Fort Pierre, all right, and then we started across the bad lands. The next day about eleven o'clock we crossed the Wakpa Shicha or the Bad River. We filled our barrel with water and tied it in the back end of the wagon, watered our horses and started on our route.

We each had a jug of water. One of our horses was sick, and about three o'clock we stopped for a little lunch and to let our horses rest. We unhitched and tied the horses to the wagon.

We thought we would just eat a little cold lunch, so we went to the wagon to get it, and we saw that our water barrel was gone.

The ropes had worn in two and let it fall out. John said he would take a rope and the well horse and go get the barrel. He started.

When he was gone about an hour the sick horse got down and commenced to roll and groan, and by the time John got back he was dead. John had found the barrel all right, but the bung was knocked out, and there was just about a pint of water left in it. We didn't know what to do after our horse was dead. John said we would wait till morning and if no one came along we would ride the one horse to the nearest place.

Next morning as we were about to start we saw two horses coming. We waited till they got to us and it was three Indians, two riding on one horse.

They rode up to us and asked for something to eat. We gave them some breakfast, but didn't have any water, for we had used all the water in our jug. One of the Indians said he would show me where to get water. I got two jugs and the horse.

We started toward the north. We had gone but about half a mile when the Indian hit me in the back of the head with something and knocked me off the horse.

When I came to the horse and Indian were both gone. I was still crazed from the lick, but I worried along back to the wagon and found John tied under it. I cut him loose. John said that when I was out of sight one of the Indians grabbed him and the two tied him under the wagon with the halters. Then they searched the wagon, got everything they wanted, and when the other Indian got there with the horse they left.

John looked in the wagon (for I was too sick from the lick on my head.) They had taken our guns, bullets and all of our groceries. We started to walk back toward the river, but I was

so sick I had to stop and lie down. John had brought a quilt along with him, for the night.

Next morning we were about dead for water and food. We went on toward the river. We got there about ten o'clock, got us some water and started again. We traveled for another day with nothing to eat.

On the next day we heard some one fire a gun back of us. We looked back and there came a man on a horse. We thought it was the Indians that had robbed us, but we waited and when he rode up it was a white man.

He said he had seen our old wagon sitting back on the route, and thought we had been killed till he saw our tracks in the trail, and so he got on a horse to overtake us. He gave us something to eat and drink, and told us to wait for his wagon.

When it came we got in and when we got to Waterhole Creek we camped. The next day they took us on into Pierre. We offered them all the money we had for their trouble. They wouldn't have it, so my cousin John and I bought us a ticket home, and all that I had was an arrowhead that I found on Bad River.

Caught in a Storm.

(By Frank A. Booth, Can.)

As you are well aware, there was a pretty fierce storm raging in this section recently. I had the misfortune to be at work when the storm came up. When noon came the storm was so fierce that I shuddered to think that I had to go home to my dinner that day. I started to go, however.

The men disliked my going out in the storm, but I was gone before they could restrain me.

Now, there is a canal, the Chambly Canal, which leads directly to the rear of our house, so I decided to take the canal bank as it was the shorter way. The canal in winter is pretty nearly empty of water and is pretty deep, being at least ten feet, and as the snow was blown off it was rocky.

The wind was blowing so terrifically that I could hardly move, and the blinding snow made me dizzy, as I had only recovered from an attack of grip.

The sharpness of the cold penetrated even through my thick clothes and chilled me. My ears, nose and other parts of my body were almost frozen, but my ears, although benumbed with cold, caught a sound of a trampling of horse's hoof and scraping of sleigh runners.

But my ears were too slow, as the sleigh was within ten yards of me coming with the horse on a gallop.

In the endeavor to get out of the way I slipped on a piece of

ice and fell heavily to the ground, hurting my hand. I rolled toward the bank of the canal before I knew anything, and would have gone over had I not made a grab and caught hold of a stout spike, and I was hanging on with one hand (the other was hurt.)

I knew I could not stand the strain long.

I looked in vain for something to help me, as the wind made such noises shouting was out of the question. I perceived a large drift of snow in the canal bed, and tried to make the spring.

I made the spring by an inch, so to speak, and landed on the soft snow. It broke my fall. I landed home after considerable trouble and fell fainting in the door. This is my experience, but I would not like to have another.

Held Up in a Wagon.

(By Emil Orthleib, L. I.)

One day near sunset in February this year I was waiting for a car to Ridgewood. After waiting fifteen minutes I found out that no cars were running on account of a flood made by a heavy rain the night before. So I thought I would walk there or ride on a wagon. It was getting dark. After walking a mile I asked a man on a large closed truck driving two nice gray horses for a ride.

He said I could. So I got on his truck. I had with me a ten-dollar bill and a small package containing a sweater for my friend, to whom I was going. The man seemed to be glad, and he looked around the truck and then at me.

All of a sudden he whipped out a revolver, pointed it at my head and said:

"Surrender."

I was too quick for him. I knocked the revolver out of his hand and it fell at the tip of my left shoe and exploded. The bullet tore away part of the canvas covering of the truck. The noise frightened the horses and they started to gallop.

A fight had taken place soon after the revolver exploded. The man tried at all times to get the revolver.

I stood guard over it, punching him right and left. The fight was ended by a heavy blow on the point of the man's chin.

I bound the strong cord on my package around the man's wrist. I took control of the horses. We were in the flood. It covered the horses' legs, and in about five minutes we were out of the flood.

When the man began to regain his senses he began to curse at me.

In about ten minutes we were in Ridgewood. I drove the wagon and brought him to the lockup. I left the man and his team in care of the police.

I went to my friend and told him everything. I remained over night. The next day I went home. The flood settled down. The cars were running, and when I got home I told my parents of my adventure.

Of course, my brother heard and he spread it like wildfire. It was in the paper the next day.

Going Walnuting.

(By Wm. Shannon, Ohio.)

It was a bright, sunny day in the early fall when I and several boys went walnuting. The air was rather crisp, but we thought only of the fun we would have.

There was a light, invigorating breeze up, and it was just the kind of a day to make one feel as if he could down the world, and would like nothing better than a chance to do the same.

There was a hay wagon in back of us, the owner of which did not think much of us because we stopped so often when the road was too narrow for him to pass us. We had just reached the crest of a hill, at the bottom of which ran the tracks of the C. and H. Railroad, when we stopped again to look at the scenery, which was superb, and again received left-handed blessings of the old farmer.

All of a sudden the sharp, loud, whistle of a railroad train was heard. My horse, which, although he was a spirited animal, was never known to run away, now took the bit between his teeth and made the dust fly.

"Look here comes the express!" I half-whispered, and tried to stop the horse. But the boys, who evidently had not seen the express, yelled out:

"Look out! The hay wagon is running away."

Such a predicament might be termed, "Between two fires." I looked again at the express, which had slowed up, but was still going about thirty-five miles an hour, and the idea that we might beat the train entered my head. The train was still a good ways off, but there was but one chance in a hundred of our making the other side of the track ahead of the train. But I decided to take that one chance.

"May God help us!" I faintly murmured, as I again spoke to the horse to urge him on.

I tell you it would take a good kinetoscope to make the landscape fly past as that horse did.

The boys had now seen the express and were clinging to the bottom of the wagon like leeches, and were as pale as so many sheets.

Down, down hill we went at that lightning speed which was increasing every minute.

Which would win?

It was a race for life with us, and we fervently prayed that we might win.

Ah! thank God we are safe. But one second later and we would have been hurled into eternity.

As it was, the hay wagon smashed into the train, and both horses were killed. The farmer had jumped and escaped with a few bruises.

Why didn't we jump?

Why, bless you, the idea never entered our heads until we were safe.

One Adventure Enough.

(By Willie Morris, Ohio.)

I met with an accident two months ago while working on a sanding machine. My hand was caught in the sander and was nearly torn off.

The doctor thought I would lose my hand, but it is better, although under the doctor's care yet.

I have had my dangerous adventures while only twelve years old, and I don't want any more soon.

Hard-Won Apples.

(By Alvin Rousch, Indiana.)

About three years ago, in the winter of 1899, I was staying at my aunt's. I went down to get an apple. The apples were in a cellar about ten foot deep, which had a brick flooring and the stairs were steep and narrow, and a person had to go slowly. I got the apple and was going up when my uncle asked me to get him one. I did it and was in a hurry and just as I was on the top step I fell.

I clutched wildly at the air. I fell with a crash on the hard brick my head was bruised and my ear was cut.

My brother found me and called my aunt. The doctor was sent for and my ear was sewn up, while my two uncles held me.

One held my hands and my head still; my other uncle held my feet still. This kept him busy, for I kicked like a government mule.

Pushed Overboard.

(By Hy. Dinger, W. Va.)

"Let's go down to the river," I said to a crowd of seven boys, coming out of the schoolyard one April day.

"All right" was the answer, and away we went. We went down to the lower yacht landing.

Just above the yacht landing on Water street is Marsh's cigar store. Right below it a large, broken hogshead used for tobacco was lying. As we passed this we all took a stave and went down to the water.

A number of the boys went on the yacht landing. I started to walk out on the foot-wide plank in back of the landing. When I was in the center of the plank I met Harry Jones with whom I was on bad terms.

We both stopped and stared at each other for a few seconds and then started on. We ran against each other and I lost my balance and fell in the deep water.

I went in under the water once and when I came up I saw a man running toward the broken hogshead. I also noticed how pale Harry was. When I came up again I saw the man running toward me with a large, broken hoop.

He ran on the yacht landing and reached one end of the hoop out to me. I grasped it and he pulled me in like a fish.

After thanking the gentleman who saved my life I ran home and got in bed. The next morning, excepting a bad cold, I was none the worse from my adventure.

An Adventure with a Drunken Tramp.

(By Leonard Brown, Ark.)

It was the middle of July, 1900. I had just drawn my week's wages, when I noticed a grizzly old tramp who was hanging around and saw me draw the money.

The night was dark, but the electric lights shone very bright. On my way home I turned up a dark street (which was near a cut).

I was accosted by the tramp. He was drunk and ordered me to hand up the "cash." I refused and he dealt me a stinging blow with a stick, but the stick was too weak and broke in two.

The blow staggered me, though.

I ran for about half a block, and the tramp close behind. Suddenly I stumped my toe and fell. My hand hit on a rock. I was up in an instant, but by this time the old tramp had drawn a long knife and was rushing upon me. "Give it up," he snarled.

"Never," said I, desperately, and flung a rock with all my might at him.

It sped true to its mark—struck him squarely between the eyes. Like a log, he fell to the ground.

Not stopping to see if he got up, I ran home. Never again do I go on that street after nightfall. I haven't seen or heard of the tramp since—"guess he is sick."

Chased by a Bull.

(By Fred Williams, N. J.)

Four boys and I, making five in all, composed our party. We started down in the country to a camp about three miles away.

We all had permission to go, for it was a friend's camp.

We arrived there about eleven o'clock. We stayed around the camp about three hours. We thought it was about time to start for home.

We took a shorter cut following the river. The path lay between the canal and the river. It was about twenty feet wide in the shortest place.

When we had got about a quarter of a mile away from the camp we heard a roar.

It was a bull after us.

The boys were all older than I was then. I was only ten years old at the time.

All the boys jumped over a wall about ten feet in height. But I kept on running till I was so tired that I plunged into the canal and swam to the other side, leaving Mr. Bull on shore.

When I got to town I built a fire along the river to dry my clothes.

An Indian Raid.

(By Harry Latimer, Ont.)

I was visiting my uncle, who lives in Alberta, when the events which I am going to relate occurred.

Uncle told me that the Blackfeet, under the noted chief Moondog, had declared war against the whites, and that I might expect to see lively times before I returned East.

A few days after this I was riding leisurely along the prairie when I was startled to hear an Indian warwhoop. Looking

back, I saw a horde of hideously painted savages riding swiftly toward me, brandishing their weapons and letting out terrible warwhoops. I drove the spurs into my horse and rode as fast as I could toward the house.

I had just got inside the stockade and given the alarm when the Indians rode up. Our men brought out their rifles and began to fire at the Indians and managed to empty several saddles. They at once rode back out of rifle shot and held a council of war. A little while after this we saw a couple of braves riding rapidly northward in the direction of their villages, we supposed for more braves. The Indians did not attack us again that day.

Next morning we were aroused by loud yells, and as we looked toward the Indian camp we saw a large body of Indians riding toward us. The smaller body joined this now, and were now ready to attack us. They rode in a close body until they were about two hundred yards off and then spread out in a line. They shot showers of arrows at us. Some of them had rifles, and used them skillfully.

They killed one of our men, but when we fired we killed ten of their men. They took no notice of this, but kept hovering round us. We fired again, and this time our fire took more effect, for the Indians rode out of range.

They did not attack again till three o'clock in the morning, this time on foot. The man on watch gave the alarm, and we manned the loopholes. The Indians ran up to the stockade and attempted to scale it, but they were driven back.

They then tried to set fire to the house by fire arrows, but these were put out. Just then we heard firing out on the plains, and noticed that all the Indians had gone away. About ten minutes after a party of mounted police rode up.

The rebellion had been put down and peace restored, and I returned East, as I had seen enough of the West to satisfy me for a couple of years at least.

LETTERS FROM PRIZE WINNERS.

Here are a few more letters, boys, from the prize winners in the past contest. Read them, boys. They are written by good story writers. Veterans of more than one contest the majority of them.

Here's one from Alfred Fred. Unlike most winners, the last was the first contest he entered.

HANCOCK, Mich.

Messrs. Street & Smith—

Gentlemen: My prize sweater has arrived, and it is a beauty. I've read most of your weeklies, but this is my first attempt at prize writing. Not a bad start, is it?

Thanking you for the above prize, I remain,

Yours respectfully,

ALFRED FRED.

February 22, 1902.

I should say it wasn't a bad start. A rattling good start.

Here's a letter from Jas. Hannan. He makes good use of his prize.

BOULDER, Col.

Messrs. Street & Smith—

Gentlemen: I was delighted to hear from you concerning my story, "Just in Time." I received my megaphone all right and use it at the baseball games.

JAS. HANNAN.

February 23, 1902.

I'll bet you are a good umpire, James. Here's a letter from another megaphone winner:

GORHAM, Me.

Messrs. Street & Smith—

Gentlemen: I received the megaphone O. K. I am much pleased with it. Thanking you for your kindness, I remain your faithful reader.

JAMES JOSE.

February 21, 1902.

Glad you like the prize.

BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1—Buffalo Bill; No. 2—Kit Carson; No. 3—Texas Jack; No. 4—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6—David Crockett; No. 7—General Sam Houston; Nos. 8 and 9—Lewis Wetzel; Nos. 10 and 11—Capt. John Smith; No. 12—Wild Bill; No. 13—Dr. Frank Powell, the Surgeon Scout; No. 14—Buckskin Sam; No. 15—Seneca Adams ("Old Grizzly" Adams); No. 16—Pony Bob (Bob Haslam); No. 17—Major John M. Burke (Arizona Jack); No. 18—Kit Carson, Jr.; No. 19—Charles Emmett (Dashing Charlie); No. 20—Alf Slade; No. 21—Arizona Charlie (Charlie Meadows); No. 22—Yellow Hair, the White Boy Chief (William Burgess); No. 23—Broncho Billy (William Powell); No. 24—Squaw-Man Jack (John Nelson).

No. 25—Major Lamar Fontaine.

(THE SHARPSHOOTER KING.)

There is no more picturesque figure in the history of remarkable Americans, types of our Western frontier, than is Major Lamar Fontaine, now at a ripe old age, dwelling upon his plantation near Lyon, Coahoma County, Mississippi.

Major Fontaine was a remarkable boy, even in his earliest years, for sports of all kinds he was an expert in, and before his tenth year he was a dead shot with both rifle and revolver, while no Comanche Indian could equal him as a rider.

He had for his tutor a learned German professor, who was also the companion of the boy from his fourth year, and began to school him in Latin, Greek, German and French even before he could speak English well.

A superb swordsman also, the professor taught the boy to fence and the result was that under such training Lamar became the superior of all young companions.

When he was ten years old, his tutor, the professor, died, and Lamar was far advanced indeed for his years, as all found when his father, an Episcopal clergyman, sent him to the country school miles from his home.

This going to school in the end brought trouble, for under the teaching of the German professor Lamar knew more than the country school master, who resented the boy's knowledge by giving him a terrible beating, which at last caused him to resist and a battle royal followed.

The teacher mounted Lamar's horse, rode to Dr. Fontaine's, told his story, and the boy, having to walk home, got there to receive another good whipping from his father.

Smarting under the unjust punishment, the boy got his things together, and the next morning, instead of going to school as told he ran away, intending to go to Mexico.

Thus the boy of ten started forth in the world, and in a strange, romantic and perilous way won a name for himself. Some score of miles had the boy gotten from home when he came upon an Indian horseman, and he told the redskin that he had run away from his people.

"Go with Comanche—treat white boy good," said the Indian.

It was well that Lamar accepted the invitation, as at once there appeared a number of braves in sight, and he was really a prisoner.

But they adopted him into their tribe, and it was nearly five long years before he again saw his home and parents.

He lived with the Indians, wandering with them from the Rio Grande to the Dakotas, and in these wanderings passed through the country of the cliff dwellers and the mound builders, the ruins of their ancient houses having a fascinating interest for him, child though he was.

At last there came an opportunity for him to escape, and he longed to see his home and friends once more, so he left the Comanches while they were on the headwaters of the Zuni River, a tributary of the Rio Grande in New Mexico.

Alone and on foot, the boy traveled for hundreds of miles through the trackless country, his training among the Indians

fitting him for the ordeal. He at last reached his home in Austin, Texas, where he was welcomed as from the grave. On this long tramp of over three months he saw no human being, and imagination alone can picture all that he must have suffered.

A short while only he remained at home, and was then sent to North Carolina to school, and leaving there because he received unjust punishment he shipped before the mast for Galveston, and later was placed under his kinsman, then Lieutenant Matthew F. Maury, who commanded the United States steamer Vincennes.

Under Lieutenant Maury, Lamar Fontaine devoted himself diligently to study, in which he was aided by the good schooling in Latin and Greek he had received under the German tutor who dwelt in his father's family.

He studied all the branches of science, navigation and civil engineering and during the six years he was cruising with Lieutenant Maury he visited many lands and seas, made valuable surveys in foreign countries and waters, and through all became a devoted student of nature.

Again visiting foreign lands, and with the love of a military life strong within him, with an iron constitution, indomitable pluck and energy, he joined the army of Russia and was in the siege of Sebastopol in the Crimean war, winning a decoration from Prince Gortschakoff for brilliant service on the field and securing fame by his phenomenal marksmanship.

This was in 1854, and the six years following found him again a world-wide wanderer and a seeker for adventure in out-of-way lands. For several years he was civil engineering in Cuba, and Central and South America, but when the tocsin sounded in the Civil War he hastened back to his home and enlisted as a private in the Tenth Mississippi Regiment, but was later ordered to Company K, Eighteenth Mississippi, of which his father, Rev. Dr. Fontaine, had been made colonel.

In the first battle of Manassas he was severely wounded, but soon after was transferred to Troop I, Second Confederate Cavalry, and was assigned to duty as special scout for "Stonewall" Jackson. This position he held until Jackson's death, and he was presented with a magnificent sword for his valuable services, for he had greatly distinguished himself upon many hard-fought fields, particularly in the desperate saber charge on the pike leading to Winchester.

Ordered to duty under General Joseph E. Johnston, Major Fontaine again distinguished himself, making full drawings of the Memphis fortifications, and he was later selected by Johnston to carry dispatches and gun caps to General Pemberton at the siege of Vicksburg. This daring duty he successfully accomplished, it being considered one of the most hazardous and skillful feats of the war.

He was captured several times during the war, but escaped each time save once, when he was sent to Fort Delaware and placed in solitary confinement for a while, being later taken to Charleston, S. C., with other prisoners.

During the time he was a Confederate soldier Fontaine was in twenty-seven pitched battles, to say nothing of the hundreds of skirmishes and the many personal encounters he had. While North as well as South he was known as the deadliest of sharpshooters, and no living man has his record for fatal marksmanship on the field of battle, as certificates from Generals Lee, "Stonewall" Jackson, Joseph E. Johnston, J. E. B. Stuart and other famous leaders go to prove, it being vouched for that in one battle he brought down sixty men with his unerring rifle.

Major Fontaine wrote during his service in Virginia that widely read poem, "All Quiet Along the Potomac To-night," and followed it with "Only a Soldier," "Oenone" and other poems, while he has also written on scientific subjects.

One of his "treasures of the war" is an order on the Confederate treasury, which shows the confidence reposed in him, for it reads as follows:

"The Confederate States Treasurer will honor any draft presented to him by Lamar Fontaine."

After the war Major Fontaine married Miss Bricknell of Yazoo County, Mississippi, and has four sons and four daughters. He has for many years pursued his profession of civil engineering, two of his sons being connected with him.

At the breaking out of the war with Spain, Edward, one son, joined the Second Mississippi Regiment.

Such is the history of Lamar Fontaine, a man who to-day does not show his years, and whose wonderful eyesight enabled him, unaided by a magnifying glass, to engrave the Lord's prayer upon a gold dollar. In Mississippi he is a popular idol, for he is open-hearted and of noble nature, a brilliant conversationalist, a deep student and possessed of universal knowledge.

It was while surveying in Southeastern Arkansas some time ago that he discovered the ruins of the prehistoric city of the mound builders. Major Fontaine claims that the Mississippi Valley is still a land of mystery to the archaeologist, and while

he does not say these unknown people were well advanced in civilization, he does maintain that they were most industrious, and men by no means to be classed as savages.

He states that these mounds stand to-day as silent sentinels over the graves of a race now extinct, and when opened they reveal remarkable relics of a day long past.

The mounds and the relics they contain puzzle scientists, who hardly venture suggestions of the people of whom they remain as monuments. Some men have denounced Major Fontaine as a lunatic because they cannot account for his discoveries; but he has made many excavations among the multitude of mounds in the three counties referred to as the site of the once mighty city which his earnest investigations tell him numbered millions of souls—full 1,000,000 inhabitants, he asserts.

In his collection at his home Major Fontaine has a vast quantity of bones, pottery and other relics taken from the mounds, one being the skull of a mound builder, who must have been a giant in the flesh.

Major Fontaine believes that the mound builders are of Chinese origin, and he is preparing a series of articles in which he gives his reasons for his belief. He further states that they were sun worshipers, and in opening the caskets he found the skeletons therein were invariably those of women.

It is a well-known and authenticated fact that Major Fontaine, in the discharge of his duty as a sharpshooter, has killed scores of men, while he has been wounded no less than fifty-seven times, many of the wounds very severe, and from which he still suffers.

His early life upon the Texas frontier inured him to hardships and suffering, and then it was that he laid the foundation for ability to carry out what he later accomplished.

His long schooling among the Comanche Indians made a man of him, and fitted him to do, dare and win. He was a border born and reared boy, and to-day with revolver or rifle no man is his equal, for to him marksmanship is a science.

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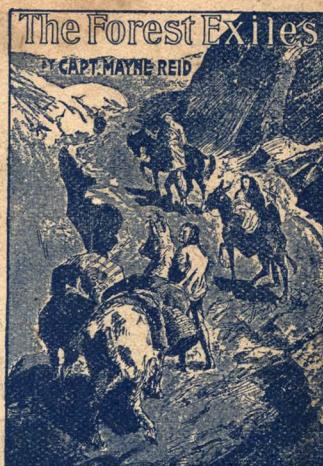
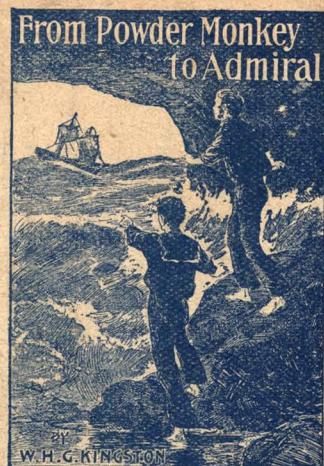
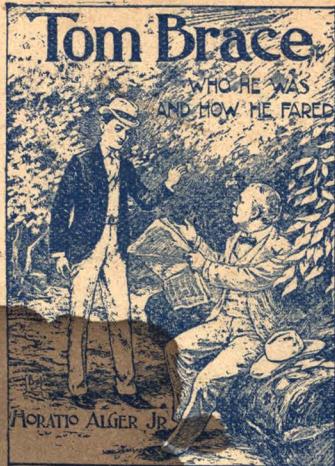
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